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Bright Morning

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BRIGHT MORNING.

VOL. II.

BRIGHT MORNING.

BY

MARIA M. GRANT,

AUTHOR OF "ARTISTE."

"Schön ist des Lebens Morgen-Thür."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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BRIGHT MORNING.

CHAPTER I.

"FERME EN FOI."

When Jim went out to Sea Grange the next day, the only observable change in him was this:—the thought struck Trixie, for the first time, that he was certainly handsome. His eyes were so brilliant and expressive, full of light and spirit, though not so soft and thrilling as some other eyes she knew. His whole face was radiant with eagerness, and she thought again and again, as she watched him moving about the room, that next to that *some one*, she knew nobody half so nice as "Cousin Jim."

Jim said nothing unusual to her, he did

not strive to sit nearer her side, did not let the tender love-light steal into his eyes as he met hers; but, when she turned away from him, he let his gaze rest and rest upon her, caressing her within his heart, and thanking God anew for what she was to him; counting repeatedly the days that must pass on before he could turn to her, and draw her to himself, and whisper, "Trixie, my own, my little darling! will you come to me, and come away with me, and live in my love and my tenderest care, and my strong protection, for all our lives to come?" He longed to say it, but he had resolved within himself, so he waited.

Trixie did not reflect Jim's brightness to-night. An occurrence had depressed her.

Her father had come home to dinner before Jim's arrival that day, full of Club-gossip, and among other things of which he was talkative, was an encounter he had had with Lady Marian Hamilton.

"Just come down," said the Colonel. "The season over in town, the young ladies

all with her. Her son? No; he could not get leave, and will probably not be down for a long time—perhaps not this season."

And Trixie was sadly depressed.

Jim saw her pale cheeks, and Aunt Helen saw them also, and the old lady talked of too long walks, and found many reasons to account for her little one's gravity.

Trixie seemed this evening to have nothing to say even to Jim, and at length, after tea, she felt the confusion of voices wearying and worrying her, and she crept away from the red parlour into the drawing-room, where the August daylight was just fading away into the shadowy night.

A soft early harvest-moon was rising, and pale stars were struggling out in the sky as she went to the window, and looked down the road, feeling this evening again the ache and the longing more sorely than she had ever felt it since Jim's return.

The twilight seemed sad, and it chilled her as she gazed out; so she turned from the window presently, and looked round the

room. It was full of soft shadows; the outlines of the furniture and picture-frames glistening in the silver light. It seemed lonely and dismal for her to stay there, and yet she could not go back and listen to the boys and her father chattering so unconcernedly in the red-parlour.

She took up a book near her, but it was too dark, she could not see—she laid it down; then she turned to the window again, but her thoughts were too painful for inaction. She felt she must do something, or she must cry; break into the feverish, impetuous weeping that overcame her sometimes in those days before Jim's return—tears that caused Aunt Helen such perplexity and pain. She knew she must conquer the disposition now, for she must go back among them soon, and be found out. So, to stop thought and to still it, she turned to the piano. Trixie could play and sing in a simple way that was always touching, though she had been too shy to perform in the great drawing-room at the Craig. Now, as she struck a few chords, the sound came forth

very sweet and plaintive, and in one moment the opening door showed that it had penetrated to the other room. Jim entered.

"I could not conceive what had become of you, Trixie," he said, "till the sound of your music reached us, and disclosed your whereabouts. May I not come in and hear you play?"

"Oh yes, come in, Jim."

And in he came, and up to the piano, and stood leaning on it by her side. She did not look at him, so *his* eyes could rest on her, full of glistening tenderness.

"Sing something, Trixie," he said. "You used to be a great hand at the old Scotch favourites, even as a little girl."

"Do you like Scotch songs, Jim? Let me see—what am I to sing to you?"

Her hands wandered over the keys for a few moments, and her thoughts evidently wandered away, for there were some tears, and a far-off look in her eyes, as, soft and thrilling in its sadness, her voice came forth, and she sang:—

"Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met, and never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

On she sang, through Burns' wistful and heart-touching song, and Jim wondered at her sadness. He thought it only moodiness, however; one of those infinite lights and shades of variety in Trixie's character that had won upon his steadfast being with so marvellous a charm. He tried to laugh her out of it.

"Trixie," he said lightly, "your singing would wring tears from an adamantine rock. You sing with the sentiment of the dying swan, or of a young lady with a story."

A flush tinged her cheek for a moment.

"Is it too sad for you?" she asked. "I like sad songs best; indeed, it is the only kind of mood that makes me sing."

"I hope," he said in a low tone, "that all sadness may long be to you, Trixie, an imagination,—expelling itself by song."

"That's all you know, Jim," she answered lightly; but she looked up into his face with a soft bright smile for a moment, in

gratitude for the wish he had spoken, which she knew had been uttered with the sincerity of a prayer.

"I like it sometimes," she went on. "I mean the pleasant kind of sadness a song imparts. Have you had enough of it, Jim, or do you want another?"

"Certainly," he answered. "Somehow I like it too."

So she sang again, and this time it was:—

"Dinna forget, laddie, dinna forget,
And ne'er mak me rue that we twa ever met;
What though we sever, parted for ever,
Dinna forget, laddie, dinna forget."

Then she looked up into his face as her fingers played the last notes of the accompaniment, and he saw the tears coursing each other down her cheeks.

"Trixie," he said, half-tenderly, half-amused, "that is too strong. Why, you have made yourself cry with your own song."

She tried to laugh back to him, and she brushed the tears petulantly away.

"Jim," she said, "do you believe in forgetting?"

"No," he answered. "At least, I cannot conceive it."

"I dare say not," she continued. "I think you are just one that could never forget."

"I hope so," he replied firmly. "'Ferme en foi,' 'Once and for ever,' I think those are the mottoes that would describe my life."

"I believe they are," she said; and then she looked up into his face again, as he stood by the piano, and she went on playing softly bar after bar, as she thought, gazing at him, how true and earnest and strong he looked, standing with the dark shadows and clear moonlight upon his face.

And he returned her gaze, kindly and steadily, and longed for the day to come when he might tell her that *she* was to him the "never-to-be-forgotten one;" that she had crept into his heart and penetrated its deepest life-spring, and that she was dearer to him, then and for ever, than all the world besides. But till the answer to that telegram came, he knew not in what terms he could put his love—to what position he could invite

her; so he folded his arms across his breast, as he stood before her, and he refrained.

"Oh! Jim," Trixie exclaimed at length, "you are good, and strong, and wonderful altogether. You are better to me than any brother ever was in this world. Oh! Jim, how I wish—how I wish——"

And she took her fingers from the keys as she spoke, and clasped them together, and looked up at him again, with a strange restless longing breaking over her face. And he bit his lip hard,—in vain striving to still its trembling,—but he looked calmly down upon her, with nothing but kind sympathy in his eyes. And she wished—from the depth of her wild, aching heart she was longing with the longing of a great weariness and a mighty hunger—that she could cast herself upon his breast, make him fold his strong arms around her, let her pour out the tale of her love and her suffering, and drink from his brotherly tenderness the strong sympathy for which her spirit starved.

CHAPTER II.

TWO "MEANWHILES."

MEANWHILE, amid the new scenes, the strange faces, the hot atmosphere, and the crowded turbulence of the great city, one strong heart was fighting in solitude that battle so hard, so beset, with the enemy which a man fights, when he has to strike single-handed for his bread; for that thing which so many men must wrest from forbidding fate by the strength of their own effort. Without it they must die; and yet, how often, when they cast their eyes round to seek it, and stretch out their hands to lay hold, it is the *one* thing which all other men seemed combined against them to refuse.

Work, by which to win, how difficult to find it!

Robert Deane had had a sad time of it, though he tried to write cheerfully home. His money was oozing away, it was nearly gone, and many weeks had passed, every day of which he had been knocking in vain at the iron-clasped gateways of literature. Unknown, unintroduced, rough, and unpromising, there was little hope for him. Nobody wanted such writings as he presented; every market seemed full, every counter crowded already with superabundant wares. His brain seemed supernumerary; nobody wanted their quaint outpourings in that busy world. He had spent many weary days in carrying his weighty manuscripts, and proffering them,—in vain.

I do not think he had five-and-sixpence left in the world as he sat in the Green Park one hot evening, gasping in the dull, sultry air, with the quiet memory brushing across him of the breath of a highland evening—of the breeze coming fresh over the moor by his father's house. He had tramped up from the grimy precincts of St. Paul's and Paternoster Row, where he

had been casting in his net again, with a hope gloomy and forlorn. Again it had come up empty. He was very weary. He set his great pile of papers down beside him on the bench, and he took his hat off, and shook back his black, shaggy hair, and looked up towards the din of Piccadilly, and then westwards where the sun was setting, crimson and fiery, above the outlines of Apsley House, and he groaned bitterly in his spirit, and cursed his fate and his fortunes, and thought of Marjory till the throb of anguish made his heart bleed again. And in his great hopelessness his head sank on his breast, and his spirit broke within him, and he sat there crushed down with failure and despair.

Meantime in the same city another life was being lived out, very different, very opposite in its details and tone.

Bright and careless, popular and admired, self-enjoying and self-absorbed, Godfrey Hamilton had gone through another London season.

It was the end of August now. His

mother had long since left town. The despotic tyranny of a stern military rule kept him and a few more unfortunates in London, while their happier comrades were on the grouse-moors in the North.

Godfrey kept his rooms in his mother's house in Lowndes Street, and one August evening he stood at the door there, exchanging last words with a brother officer, to whom the blissful advent of shooting leave had arrived. He was to be off from King's Cross at nine o'clock that night.

Goff had been on duty all day, and he wore now his undress uniform, the dark-blue frock-coat, the crimson sash across his shoulder, and a little foraging cap stuck jauntily on his brown, curly head. He looked bright and *débonnaire*, as usual, as he leant on the railing-tops, smiled down upon his friend, and exchanged their farewell.

"Lucky dog, Chadleigh. I wish I were you."

"I would not be you certainly, for the moment," replied the other.

"No; I should think not! We want new

army regulations, and no mistake,—keeping a fellow grilling in town after the 12th is more than human flesh can bear. A fellow feels so blue when he sees every other man starting off to the highlands, and knows they're going to have no end of fun. It's a confounded nuisance!"

"It is not so hard on you, however, as it might be on some people," said Chadleigh with a significant laugh.

Godfrey coloured a little, and laughed too, but with some uneasiness.

"By Jove!" continued his friend. "I declare you're blushing! Well, I certainly did not give you credit for so much modesty. It's all right though, Goff, isn't it? fair matter of chaff, old fellow?"

"Oh yes," said Godfrey, trying to shake off his embarrassment. "Of course it is; chaff away, my boy."

"Well, then, I don't think you are so much to be pitied. You haven't two hours of duty to do in a week, and you may ride down to Roehampton every day you please, and hear the nightingales, and whisper soft

nothings, etcetera, etcetera—in fact, make love. And, by Jove, Hamilton, I'm sure there isn't a fellow among us that wouldn't give even from the twelfth to the thirtieth of August for your chance. Two hundred thousand pounds! Go in and win, old fellow, and I leave you my blessing and my best wishes for your good luck."

"It hasn't come to anything yet, Chadleigh; but, hang it, when a fellow is dipped, as I have been this year, by every bit of bad luck that the turf could give me, that little sum you mention sounds somewhat pleasant."

"I should just think so. Pull up, Goff, you're going too fast—pull up, old boy. Pay off old scores now, go in and win the heiress, and make it all square. Don't look modest, you humbugging fellow. You know you only have to ask for her. If she showers her sovereigns on you as she showers her smiles, you will turn into a monument of lustrous gold by the time I come back again."

Godfrey stroked his moustache, and looked

conscious and complacent, and then his eyes wandered away again, and a curious perplexed expression came over them.

"Well, good-bye, old boy. You're not going north at all this year, are you?"

"I do not know," said Goff. "I fancy when Lethbridge comes back, I may get my fortnight. But I may go down to Harvard's yacht, perhaps; or I *may* run up to Scotland for the Caledonian ball to my own place. I do not know, however. Good luck to you, Chadleigh—good-bye."

Away went his friend, and Godfrey turned into the house. He was going to dine at a club in St. James's with a stray man who "had turned up," and he went now through the house to his own premises—a bedroom and sitting-room built out at the back—and began presently his toilet for his late dinner.

He changed his uniform for evening dress, put a fresh moss-rose into his buttonhole, equipped himself in a light, dust-coloured over-coat, said a few words to his servant, and again left the house. He

walked along by Belgrave Square into Grosvenor Place, and across into the Green Park. The air was cool and fresh now, and it was pleasant to stroll leisurely over the grass. He had chosen to walk, because it helped his reflections, and,—unusual as was the circumstance,—this evening, Godfrey wished to reflect.

All the time he had been dressing, and now as he strolled along the park, a train of thoughts had been possessing him that were roused up by Chadleigh's words.

Godfrey seldom thought. Just the present moment generally occupied him, and the object of his pursuit was seldom anything that called for time or perseverance to obtain.

Life had been drifted to him, and he had done little more than stoop and drink its pleasures as they floated by his feet. He had drank deeply, and had found them sufficient; they filled his brain, they occupied his time, and they nearly satisfied everything within him that could be termed—a heart.

As they came ceaselessly, these life-

sweets, they brought in their very essence that power to crush thought and to stop retrospection, that enables men so pleasantly to forget. And Godfrey Hamilton's life was one continued "forgetting," one good thing just went for better, "as the blossom for the rose," and the amusement of to-day made each yesterday a dream.

So he had come back to London last May, with this habit of "forgetting" strong upon him, and so many things came, one upon another, the Derby, Ascot, Goodwood, and, besides those important landmarks, a very crowded season in every way. Balls without number, the Park, the opera—quite an infinity of social claims, and amongst them all he forgot for a long time (not having any particular principle on the subject) certain promises spoken, certain kisses given, on a bright May morning far away in the North.

Why, that was quite before the season! In the season so much had occurred, he had not had time to think. He lost heavily on successive races, "had a bad run of luck," he said, and things were beginning to look

very threatening with him in consequence, when one fine day he went to a breakfast at Roehampton.

He was dragged there by a brother officer, who wished to embellish his sister's croquet-ground by the handsomest man of the Fusiliers; and there Godfrey—sending his ball with the stroke of a Goliath from end to end of the great lawn—met the admiring gaze of Miss Adelaide Cathcart, a renowned heiress, who owned, moreover, many attractions besides her gold.

Godfrey was introduced to her, and a kind of friendship began. Morning after morning Miss Cathcart took the long ride to London, for the pleasure of half an hour's talk with the Guards' athletic hero in Rotten Row. And he took to evening drives into the country, and dropped into a habit of five o'clock tea at Cedar Grove. She admired him, and liked to have his stalwart figure and sunny face loitering by her side; and he—well, his mother told him of the heiress's prospects, and gave him her blessing, with a pious prayer for his success.

And Godfrey knew lots of fellows envied him, and that riding by Miss Cathcart was more or less "the thing," so he dropped into it, for he did not dislike her, and their acquaintance grew.

Oddly enough, the more it grew, the more they realised they were neither of them in love, not a bit in love—and not going to be. More strangely still, Adelaide Cathcart brought back to Godfrey's mind the almost forgotten memory of Trixie. The more he told himself solemnly "how nice a girl the heiress was," and "what a capital thing for him," so much the more the feeling rose up within him, of what the real thing had been only three months before. The memory of the soft lips he had kissed so tenderly, of bright, melting eyes looking shyly up at him, of a sweet wistful voice whispering his name,—back, back the memory came to him, as he rode by Adelaide Cathcart, with thrills of feeling that were certainly not roused by any powers of hers.

Adelaide Cathcart had also had her story. *She* had loved. Her love had been wrested

from her, and she could not love again. She was hard now, self-possessed, and eminently sensible. She was not going to wreck her life for love, she said, not she! but she said it very bitterly. She had two hundred thousand pounds, and she meant to marry—a man of looks, for she liked to be proud of her belongings, from her husband to her horse; a man of family connection, for she had none of her own; and above all, as she expressed it often, a man of "go." All this she met in Godfrey Hamilton, and she encouraged him.

Adelaide had a father; the money was still a prospective thing. "Tant pis," as Godfrey muttered to himself many a time, shrugging his shoulders at the mess-room fire; "tant pis," could he ever face that austere parent?

Adelaide was to have all the money some day, and she might choose her husband for herself, her father told her, but with one proviso. Old Cathcart did not care for connection, and certainly not a jot for looks, but he used to say to his daughter, with

many an old-fashioned oath, that he had a weakness for *character*, a wholesome abhorrence of an extravagant man. He had made his money, and he would not rest in his grave, he said, if he thought it squandered.

An impediment certainly for Godfrey!—but one he thought he could surmount. He had not "come to the scratch yet," however, and as he walked along the Green Park on this summer evening, he thought not only of debts accumulating, of Adelaide impending, but of Trixie as well, who, with her soft glances and whispered words, seemed to lure him back into life of another kind again.

He passed Buckingham Palace, and drew near the corner by Ellesmere House, walking with his hands buried deep in his pockets, his eyes fixed upon the ground. He was making for the passage into St. James's, and looked up suddenly to see if his path was direct. As he looked, his eyes were arrested by the rich flush of colour that had fallen from the red sunset over

park and houses and green, dusty trees, and he let his gaze wander absently over the scene. There were few people about him, none but some weary city stragglers, seeking a breath of air after their day of toil, and each figure stood out in the glow of sunset, looking weird and mysterious.

On a bench just in front of him he saw a man, evidently resting from very weariness; his head fallen forward on his hand, his figure drooping, and his whole aspect speaking depression and despair.

"Poor duffer!" thought Godfrey, "what a seedy looking chap! I wonder what's up with him." And he drew near him.

It was the figure of a very large man, stalwart and broad shouldered as Godfrey himself, and as Goff drew near he stopped instinctively to admire the strong build, so pleasing to his athletically critical eye. Something seemed familiar to him in the whole figure, and perhaps this unconsciously stopped him as well. A pile of papers lay on the bench by the man's side unnoticed,

for he sat with that wonderful disregarding stillness of dejection and despair.

And Godfrey looked at him, standing silent for some minutes, and then was moving away. His foot crunched the gravel so close to the bench, that the man moved suddenly, raised his head, and looked up at Godfrey, with a pair of strong dark eyes. They both started.

"Good God!" exclaimed Godfrey, "Robert Deane!" The other rose to his feet.

"Deane!" exclaimed Godfrey again, extending his hand, "I am very glad to see you. How do you do?"

"How are you?" replied Deane.

"By Jove!" thought Godfrey, his ideas travelling quickly. "Robert Deane! Jim Lindsay's old tutor and Marjory's betrothed! that queer writing fellow, to be sure,—I remember all about him. Poor fellow, he seems in a bad way."

"How odd our meeting, Deane!" he said aloud.

"Yes," replied Robert, and his looks brightened at the sight of the fresh kindly

face. So many weeks had elapsed since a hand had clasped his in cordiality, or a voice familiarly uttered his name. "It is a pleasure to me to meet you," he said.

"Of course," replied Godfrey, "it's capital. Why, I never knew you were in town. How odd, to be sure, altogether! Have you been here long?"

"About five weeks," said Deane.

"Fancy. I am very glad I met you," continued Goff, running his eye over Deane's downcast appearance, and wondering to himself what questions he might ask.

"Did you leave them all right in Edinburgh?" he said at last.

"Quite well," said Robert.

"Jim is still at home?"

"Yes, but I imagine he is going out again immediately."

"Oh!" What more could Godfrey say? Should he express a hope that they might meet again, and then pass on his way, or should he ask him to dinner? But to-night he was fixed for the "Rag." Get his

address, and write and ask him in a day or two? Yes, that would do; so he continued aloud again—

"Where are you putting up, Deane? You must come and dine with me, and give me all the news of them at home. What is your address?"

Deane's face darkened, and he hesitated a moment.

"I have no address," he said presently.

"What?" said Godfrey.

"I've got a room in Exeter Street," continued Robert, "but I'm going to leave it to-night."

"And where are you going then?"

"I do not know," said Deane; and then hunger and weariness and despair overcame him again, and he sat down on the bench, and looked up into Godfrey's face. With such eyes—deep, struggling, and full of anguish, and also full of power. It was like the gaze of some strong animal, tortured beyond endurance, and too proud in its suffering strength to emit a groan.

Godfrey read the story in his eyes, and

—careless, thoughtless fellow as he was—there came up bubbling within him, for the moment, that warm impulsive nature that would have run so sparkling and so clear, if poisoning tastes and selfish habits *could* have been filtered away. Up it came now, and Goff sat down by Robert on the bench, and forgot his dinner at the Rag.

"Deane," he said, "tell us all about it. What's up? We are old acquaintances, you know."

Deane shook his head, and answered nothing.

"Come, old fellow, don't be dark with me. What's the matter, Deane?"

"I want work," said Deane, "and I cannot get it. That is all."

"Whew!" whistled Godfrey; "and because you cannot get it, you are down. I quite understand."

"Because I cannot get it," said Robert, "I must——"

"What?" persisted Godfrey.

"I must starve."

Godfrey looked straight at him, and won-

dered within himself. Starve! in this England—that massive powerful frame—that intellect whose wealth he knew of old! It seemed too preposterous!

"Deane," he said aloud, "it is surely not so bad a business as that. Cannot I help? Is there nothing can be done? Let me see," he continued, assuming a business-like manner, as if determined to apply himself seriously to the case; "let me see—What sort of work do you want, Deane? Of course, yes; you want to write books, and have them printed."

"I have written plenty, for the matter of that!" replied Robert gloomily.

"Yes, of course you have; and now you want some one to print them, and make them up in covers ready for the shops. Let me, see. What sort of fellows are they, Deane, who do that kind of thing?"

"Publishers," said Robert, smiling, in spite of his despair. "I cannot find a publisher, and that is my trouble."

"Publishers!" exclaimed Godfrey, his face radiating with delight, "would a pub-

lisher do? Is that all you want? Why, Deane, I can set you up in a capital one?"

Robert looked at him in puzzled surprise, and Goff went on.

"Why, Doddy Sandgrave, my Sub, is a publisher's son, of course he is. Dod will do anything for me (worse luck for him if he did not). I'll look in on him to-night, Deane, and make him drop a line to his governor, telling him to print and bind up every one of your books. It's capital—you're set up. Woe betide Doddy if he doesn't obey my behests."

Robert still stared gravely at him.

"What do you mean?" he said. "Can you really get me an introduction to a publisher through his son?"

"Of course I can."

"Well, it might be of great service to me," said Robert.

"Of course it would. I know old Sandgrave. I've dined there. He's a capital old bird, and he will do the thing right off. Stop a bit. Let us see how we shall manage

it. You had better come round to Doddy's with me to-night."

"Very well," said Robert. "Thank you heartily," he added.

"Oh nonsense, never mind that. By-the-bye," he continued, suddenly recollecting himself, and looking curiously into Robert's face, "have you dined, Deane?"

The other shook his head.

"I thought not—nor have I. Come along, I am engaged to a man at the 'Rag,' but I shall just send him round a line, and you and I will drop into the 'St. James's,' and feed together. Come along, don't hesitate,—we haven't even began to talk over home news yet, and you know, after dinner we must go to Doddy's; so come along."

CHAPTER III.

LAUNCHED AT LAST.

THE head of the firm of Pratt and Sandgrave was very proud of his son in the Guards. Sandgrave was the head, in fact, single representative of the firm, Pratt having long ceased to be more than a name. Sandgrave was proud of his son, and hospitable to his friends.

So, when Robert Deane stood before him, presenting a letter from the barracks of the Fusiliers, the firm of Sandgrave eyed him curiously from head to foot, but received the letter with complaisance, and perused it. Then he eyed the bearer again, and muttered "foolish boy" to himself, in a tone that vibrated between business promptings and

parental pride, and then he murmured confidentially to Robert—

"I *hope* it is in three volumes?"

"What?" said Deane.

"I assure you, nothing pays but the three volumes—the libraries stand nothing else."

"I do not know what you mean," said Robert.

"What is the title?" continued Mr. Sandgrave. "*That* is a great point."

"Title of what? Which? There are several complete books." And he prepared to outspread his manuscripts.

"Ah, but I mean, of your novel? The one at present in point?"

"My novel?" exclaimed Robert, starting back with indignation.

"Yes," continued Mr. Sandgrave. "We publish nothing but novels; the rest is, at present, immaterial."

Robert gathered up his papers with impetuous haste.

"Then," he said, "I fear my writings can be of no service to you, and I wish you good morning, sir."

"Stop, stop," cried the publisher, referring again to his son's note, "wait a moment." And he re-read the note, which ran somewhat in this strain:—

"Hamilton is my captain, a first-rate fellow, nephew of Lord Clarenleigh's; gives the best dinners, and has the finest cover-shooting of any man I know, always meet A. 1 people in his lot. He will be awfully offended if you cannot do something for his queer friend—so mind you don't fail.

"Dear governor, your affectionate son,

"THEO. SANDGRAVE."

"By jingo!" reflected the publisher, "here is a pretty business in hand. Let me see, what sort of things do you write?"

"Sometimes poetry," replied Robert.

"Useless," said the Firm, "we do not publish a magazine. What else?"

"Some annotations on Grecian Classics," said Robert. "But my writings are mostly on natural science. 'Theory on the Influence of the Gulf Stream,'" he continued

reading his titles aloud, "'The Monad,' 'Marine Articulata——'"

"Good heavens! Stop, stop, stop," cried Mr. Sandgrave aghast. "Why, you should not have come to me, my dear sir. What, in fortune's name, can I do with such productions as these? Bless me, bless me, I wish my brother were at home, he is a little in the scientific way, but he is abroad. Stop a bit, stop a bit, let me see. There, just leave the MSS., and I must think over it. I may have influence to get an article or two squeezed into the R. S. Journal, through some friends of his. Yes, just leave them here, and call back at this hour to-morrow, and I will try what can be done; but in the long-run, it is useless. Let me implore you to take to fiction. The three volumes, sir, the three volumes, it is the only thing that pays."

Robert laughed bitterly, laid down his papers, turned on his heels, and swung out of the office.

Pratt and Sandgrave's was situated in a little lane, leading out of a great thorough-

fare. Robert turned towards this, and walked moodily along, considering how he should spend his hours till to-morrow, and feeling that with all Godfrey's assistance, it was a dim, uncertain prospect that had unveiled itself.

He was walking with eyes downcast, when suddenly at the street-corner he ran against some one coming hurriedly along. He was obliged to look up and make way, and he saw a tall man, with very stooping shoulders, and a quantity of grey hair, wearing spectacles, and owning keen eyes, a long inquiring looking nose, and carrying a huge volume under one arm.

Robert made way for him, and the man walked hastily on towards the publishers. He turned in, and in another moment was standing where Robert had stood, opposite to the firm of Sandgrave, on the outer side of the desk, receiving, however, a different greeting.

"Ah, Dr. Anstruther, how d'ye do?" exclaimed the publisher cordially.

"Quite well, I thank you," replied the

other in a quick, energetic voice. "How are you? I won't disturb you a moment. Don't put your pen down—don't get up—I want your brother's address."

"He is in Germany, sir."

"Yes, I know; and I want him to go round by Munich (I know he will do it), and to call upon Herr Gernstoff Heideltocher, and ask him his opinion, just on this point." And Dr. Anstruther took down the book from under his arm, disclosing the fact that he was all the time keeping the page open with his finger, and he pointed out a sentence to old Sandgrave.

"Oh, bother!" he said presently, "I forgot you don't know anything about it. But just give me your brother's address, he will do the business. It is a point of dispute," he added solemnly, "on the tissue of an animalcule's wing. Halloo! what have we here?" And he pounced on Robert's manuscripts, while Sandgrave wrote the address.

He walked to the window with them, peering at the titles with his short-sighted eyes, and repeating them aloud.

"Ah! this is something in my line!"

He perched himself on a high three-cornered stool that happened to stand near, and plunged into the essay on Articulata, while Sandgrave had the discretion to watch him in silence.

He conned page after page with a rapid eye and delighted visage, emitting exclamations, now of approval, sometimes of enthusiasm, here and there of questioning doubt, such as "Not sound; not quite sound,"—"Scientific bases not sufficient." But all the time he was wrapt, lost to all surroundings, absorbed in his interest and enjoyment.

"Gad!" he said, looking up at last, "he has a strong argument on his side. Where is the man—who is he? Who dared to write these things?"

He looked excited and eager, but not angry, as his words inferred.

"Is it good?" said Sandgrave.

"Good? It is the best and most astute critical analysis I have ever encountered, of my own work on the 'Insects of the Sea!'"

"Extraordinary!"

"Humph! more than extraordinary to me, I can tell you. Whips me on several points, and with my own weapons too. And yet, I like the fellow. I like his style, I like his mind; and I can tell you, his brain-engines must be made of cast-steel. Where is he, I ask you? Who is he? Where can I find the man? I should like to argue the point well out with him, though I think —I confess I am in the wrong."

"Extraordinary!" repeated Sandgrave.

"Oh, bother! Tell me where he is. I haven't time to stay here while you ejaculate. Is that your brother's address? Thank you. And my enemy's—have you written it down, too?"

"I don't know it."

"Not know it!" roared Dr. Anstruther. "What! you let such a brain as that walk unknown away?"

"He is coming back to-morrow morning," said Sandgrave.

"Ah! that will do. I shall be here to meet him. What hour—eleven? Excellent.

I will take all these essays home with me, meanwhile, and be prepared with my replies."

So next morning, while Robert, still hopeless and depressed, presented himself at the Sandgrave office, he was met unceremoniously by the grey-haired man whom he had nearly knocked down the day before—met by the glistening spectacles, peering into his face with the sharp lights behind them, and accosted with the unpreluded assertion—

"You are coming to dine with me to-night!"

Robert bowed gravely, and stared.

"Yes, it's all right—we have to talk all these things over, you know. I've read every word of them, and I do not agree with you in that view of the 'Clio Borealis' of the Arctic Seas. No; we must talk it out. Don't forget, No. 19, Wimpole Street, half-past six o'clock sharp. Good morning, I am in a terrible hurry." And away he ran.

"Who is the gentleman?" asked Robert, turning to Sandgrave.

"Oh, it is all right—capital!" replied the publisher. "I am not to mention his name; but you go and dine with him, and something will turn up. I am very glad of it. I wish you very good fortune, Mr. Deane; and you may come back to me at any time, if you like to take to the three volumes."

Robert went to his dinner in Wimpole Street, and was shown up to a snug little *tête-à-tête* repast. There was the grey-haired man and the spectacles, his own essays in a pile on the writing-table, and a cordial welcome that set him quickly at his ease.

They talked first scientifically, then confidentially. They talked in combat, in sympathy, and in mutual appreciation, till the evening drew to a close, and Robert rose to take his departure. Then the spectacles grew brilliant in their excitement, and the grey-haired man seized him violently by the hand, and suddenly exclaimed—

"Now, you would like to know who I am, I dare say. I am a Scotchman—droll,

eh! did not you guess it? I am a Scotchman, and so are you—and I cannot conceive why you left Edinburgh, where they are better up in our kind of work than anywhere else I know. What? No friends there, eh! Quarrelsome! Yes, I dare say you are—you look like it—ridiculous—*very* foolish—but I do not think you will quarrel with me. Takes two to do that—eh? Yes. Well there is a Fate—a Providence—in these things, in our comings and goings—no doubt of it, and here you are now,—and you are the very man for me—the man I was in search of—and I do believe I am the *very* man you—you do not know who I am, of course you do not; but I am a Scotchman I tell you. I am Ralph Anstruther, of the Deep-sea Investigation, and what is more, I am going out for a two years' cruise in a Government chartered ship to the Pacific. I'm going to fish up heaps of information. And what's more still, I have read your works, I have talked with you, I have heard your story, I like you very much, and I

am going to take you with me—that is, if you will go. What say you? Reporter for the 'Royal Scientific Journal of the Deep-sea Investigations,' written weekly, as they proceed,—eh! will that suit you? Much better for your brain-engines and everything in your career than writing more poetry. Do that by-and-by. Come along with me, and do this business now, for it will make a great man of you in our world, if you do it well. Eh?—yes!—that's capital! It is settled, then. Thanks is it?—no, not a word. Next Wednesday, at twelve A.M., we sail together."

That evening's post took a long letter to Margie. Farewell, again—but still a bright farewell, all wreathed with the glory of a golden hope.

CHAPTER IV.

FAIR PROMISE.

It was the end of September. The Caledonian Hunt was in Edinburgh this year, and everybody expected a brilliant ball.

Colonel O'Neil heard much talk of it at the clubs, and one day he came home inspired with the fancy that Trixie should go. Aunt Helen made many old-world objections, but Jim thought it would be very pleasant that they should all be there together, and he urged it too; so Aunt Helen gave in.

Trixie did not feel much heart about it. Her first and only ball had sweet and exquisite associations, that she fancied could never be repeated. A ball had seemed, just that once, a dazzling acme of human happiness;

but another ball, she thought, might be fraught with only pain. Besides, it was to be one of the last things that she and Jim were to do together; his departure drew terribly near.

She had grown restless again lately. The Hamiltons were at the Craig. Lady Marian had paid a state visit to Miss Helen, and Trixie had been forced to drive there and return the call, also in profound state; just a dreary, ghostly reminder of such sun-lit days. It had tortured her, and left her miserable ever since. It had been too dreary to look down the lawn from the drawing-room window, as she sat listening to her Aunt and Lady Marian's talk; too painful to catch sight of the croquet-ground, and the bank where she and Godfrey had sat that long afternoon, while the others played—to see the winding path that led away among the shrubberies, and down towards the chestnut-trees by the lake side. And worst of all, as she walked out again, across the hall, feeling chilled and nervous, she saw the door standing open into the girls' little

morning-room, and caught sight of the sofa where they had sat together, while he had poured forth his tale of love. It was all too dreary, and she had certainly not much heart for the Caledonian Ball.

She told Jim she was very sad at the prospect of his leaving again, and Jim believed her to a much fuller extent than she had meant to imply. And he, poor boy, whispered the flattering assurance to his own heart, that she was really grieving on his account, and told himself joyously that a few days now would bring the news that would chase her grief away.

Had she not always told him how she would like to be going, as he went, abroad? His heart believed her, and he was wonderfully happy.

He spent the afternoon at Sea Grange on the day of the ball, and came home to Castle Street after dinner, to dress, having arranged to meet them in the Assembly Rooms.

As he walked up-stairs in Castle Street, his mother and sister both met him with

bright, expectant looks, and Marjory put a long yellow envelope into his hand.

The telegram! His face glowed as he received it, and his excitement was too strong for words. He went up into the drawing-room, and sat down on the nearest chair, and opened it with trembling hands. One glance was sufficient:—

"*Accorded, and welcome,*" ran the words. "*Leave till the 30th October.*"

The paper dropped from his hand, and a crimson flush rushed over Jim's countenance, his eyes filled with burning tears, he looked up into his mother's face for a moment, then he covered his own with his hands.

"Dear Jamie! I'm so thankful," whispered Mrs. Lindsay.

Marjory laid her hand on his shoulder, but found no words to say. Presently he looked up again, and the colour had fled from his face, and he was deadly pale. An expression of fear had come into his eyes, and he breathed hardly for a moment, then said in a low tone—

"So far it is well; but oh, my God!

suppose I have expected too much? If it should not be equally well when I come to speak to her! Oh, Margie, have I been too sanguine?"

"I cannot think so," she answered. "I do not fear for you. Jim, will you speak to-night?"

"Yes," he said, rising hastily, "I will ask her to-night; no more waiting, no more delay; she shall know at last how I have felt for her; she shall realise to-night what a time I have been living through all these weeks gone by."

And he went off to dress.

CHAPTER V.

"FOR THE LOVING LIPS ARE LAUGHING, AND THE LOVING FACE IS FAIR."

THE Caledonian Ball was a brilliant assemblage. As Jim drew near the arched doorway under the colonnades at the Great George Street entrance, he found himself amid lines of carriages, already drawn up, and crowds of bystanders gathered to watch the ladies pass in.

The strains of waltz music too reached his ears before he entered, and he realised that in his confusion of glad excitement he had allowed himself to be a little late. The first great opening, "Hulachan," had been performed, and it was the full soft strains of a Cootes and Tinney that met him as he walked up the stairs.

"I daresay they've already gone in," he thought to himself. "What a fool I was to be behind my time!"

He ventured to glance into the ladies' cloak-room as he passed it, hoping to discern among the clouds of tulle and tarlatan, something like Trixie's form, but she was not there. He went on into the little ante-hall, and found himself behind a knot of kilts, uniforms, and black coats, clustering about the great entrance-door, and above their heads, as they all stood peering over each other's shoulders, he could see a wondrous floating maze of light and colour, and brilliancy, filling the Assembly Rooms from end to end.

Above the vast infinity of pirouetting heads, Jim saw a row of thrones erected on a daïs of crimson, and filled with regal-looking matrons, the lady patronesses of the ball, and among them he recognised Lady Marian Hamilton. Yes, and there were her daughters Helen and Edith too; he detected them among the crowd, one floating airily round, supported by the scarlet strength of one of

her Majesty's Infantry, the other resting a moment just opposite to him, on the arm of a stalwart hero in Caledonian attire.

But where were his friends to be found? Ne Trixie floated past him in the mazy crowd; he pushed through the knot of men, and reached the door, and there, in the very front rank of the onlookers, he knocked against his uncle, got up wonderfully, as Jim thought to himself, in a most trim ball-room attire, looking very young and well-preserved, and talking to a tall middle-aged man, whom Jim had never seen before. He did not interrupt them for a moment, but stood waiting a break in their conversation, and inspected the stranger in the mean-while, and wondered who he was.

He was a large, strong-built man, with a great deal of acute intelligence in his grey eyes, and his powerful-looking fore-head. The mouth was stern, the features comely and well-formed, and the general impress was strength and shrewdness, self-assertion, and obstinacy indomitable. He spoke to Colonel O'Neil with a certain air of

patronage, implying a consciousness of some importance appertaining to himself.

Colonel O'Neil turned suddenly and observed Jim.

"Ah!" he said, "here you are. You're very late. Mr. Forde," he continued, turning rather obsequiously to his companion, "will you allow me to present my nephew to you? A young fellow, sir, a young fellow, just getting into harness."

Mr. Forde bowed his willingness for the introduction, and extended a finger, rather ungraciously, to Jim, while the Colonel pronounced their names.

"James Lindsay—Mr. Forde."

"Humph!" reflected Jim, as he walked away, when a curt greeting had been exchanged between them. "That is it, is it? Andrew Forde, the ship-builder! I wonder where my uncle picked acquaintance with *him*—his manners are certainly not distinguished for suavity."

And neither they were. Andrew Forde was not a man who ever wasted, without a definite object, either smiles or words. He

lavished both, however, on Jim's uncle, and patronised him the while; and Colonel O'Neil sunned himself in the smiles, drank in the ambrosial words, and was unconscious of the patronage. He was quite absorbed in the effort to realise that he was conversing with the richest man in the room.

Jim moved away in search of Trixie, and in two seconds had forgotten the existence of the ship-builder.

The waltz was over, and he had to thread his way now through a tangled skein of promenading couples, all crossing and re-crossing each other. He met many acquaintances as he walked slowly among them in his search of Trixie, and many fair faces smiled brightly up at him; but he passed them, each in turn, with a grave bow. He sought only one bright face to be his partner to-night, but he could not find her. The glittering crowd trooped by him to and fro, but no Trixie was among them. Where could she be? He turned towards the supper-room, his heart beating with impatience. He had so much to tell her, such

words to whisper in her ear to-night,—he must find her.

The dancing began again, the supper-room was emptied, only a few straggling couples lingering here and there, at the tables that lined the hall, and Trixie was not one of these. He turned into the vestibule again, his heart still beating strangely, and a dull feeling of disappointment seemed to creep over him at his eager hope being thus deferred, and a feeling came to him that it was curious that he should be thus searching for her, searching, searching among all this brilliant crowd, and that he should not find her.

He circumvented the dancers carefully again—surely, he thought, he had looked beneath every wreath, and penetrated every corner of the two great halls. Where could she be?

Suddenly his eye detected an exit from the Assembly Rooms that he had not observed before. Away at the right hand corner, as you enter the hall, was a low doorway, draped with a rosy curtain. Sud-

Hideous, mocking, brilliant, beautiful scene!

The music swept unheard above his head, the crowd pushed by him, they danced and promenaded, they laughed and talked all unheeding; while Jim stood alone in the corner, by the low-curtained doorway, staring, as one stunned, upon the crowd.

He had not an idea how long he had stood there. It might be any length of time; he felt that weeks, months, nay, years, seemed to sweep over him in that one hour,—the space that lay between him and the hope he had loved. He felt as if he had come forth, during that hour, from a bright, glorious Eden of happiness, of friendship, companionship, and love, and as if he had been dreaming in there (only dreaming, it now seemed to him), and had been all suddenly awoke, to know himself lonely, heart-broken, and unloved; driven out into his dreary life alone, love crushed out within him, love wrĕnched cruelly from him. Love—that golden, bejewelled cup, filled with its ruby treasure all sparkling

and enticing—had been snatched from his trembling hand as it touched his very lips, and lay dashed now in a thousand fragments, a horrid ruin at his feet.

And at his elbow came suddenly a ringing voice, thrilling his heart with anguish—a ringing, rippling voice—and he turned, in spite of himself, to meet a face so bright, so softened, so fair, he seemed wild with pain and bitterness as he encountered it.

"Jim," Trixie was saying, "how very naughty you are! Fancy, after all your promises, never appearing until now! Look!" —and she glanced from him up into the joyous, smiling face of her companion, towering far above her, the face that had bent over hers so close, as Jim watched them in the little room.

It was bright now, and glowing with cordiality and friendship, and Jim had to crush back every dark instinct of repugnance, and nerve himself to take Godfrey Hamilton's hand.

"You dear old fellow," Goff was saying, "I'm so delighted to see you."

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"You dear old fellow," Goff was saying, "I'm so delighted to see you."

pirouetting through that tangled throng. Godfrey was his master there; that strong arm might be safely trusted to guide and support her through the mazes of—a waltz. But through that wider labyrinth—so tangled too, so glittering too, so often equally confusing, the labyrinth of life—which arm might be surest? Ah, that was another thing!

He saw them stop, and he watched them talk together; they sat down a moment, then they waltzed again, and Jim stood still in his corner, and strove to realise the great subversion that had taken place within *his* life.

There was much poisoned anguish in the blow, that came simply from his utter disappointment in Trixie herself. It was such a sudden revelation to him of the deep background in her being, of which he had been ignorant—such a cruel unveiling of a new Trixie, such a fading away of the image he had cherished, the young bright thing whose soul he had imagined lay open to him, whose heart he had thought clear and transparent as a limpid stream.

He had fancied he had known all that was Trixie, and here lay another heart, another sphere of ideas, a whole new passionate life that had been living and throbbing strongly all these weeks, and had been hidden from him. She was not his fair ideal—that died for ever, as he stood there, crushing, with fierce effort, his own heart's fever away.

What should he do now? She would be back by him directly, putting her hand within his arm, looking up into his face, smiling at him, drawing him away to dance with her. And in his utter misery, what should he do? Should he lay his broken heart down before her, and tell her she had crushed it to atoms beneath her light tread? Should he stoop just once, and pour out his love to her, tell her the whole life, and power, and passion of his strong heart was all her own? Tell her once, and hear her softly pity him, and then see her turn away? No! Impossible!

Every step seemed beset with suffering, let him turn where he would. Suffering

uncompromising, but to be met, he told himself, and to be endured. He folded his arms across his breast at last, with a gesture that always came to him when he was gathering himself together to be strong. The old blood of Lindsay throbbing hotly in his veins, came and helped him a good deal, for it told him that no Lindsay ever bent and shivered before life's tempest like a sapling in the wind. It must be endured.

In tempest firm, in suffering strong, so should a man—above all, a Lindsay—evince himself to be, and Jim took all the old knightly armour to him, steeled his eye, drew the impenetrable visor of control over his countenance, reared his head proudly to confront, and turned himself bravely towards the storm. No man should see into *his* heart, all-suffering and tortured as it was. He *must* control himself. He must be strong. He had time for a short struggle, and he succeeded,—he crushed back himself.

When they both returned to him, he walked forward to meet them, and answered Godfrey's sallies now in the tone in

which they were put. He looked into Trixie's face, and smiled in answer to her radiant eyes, and they three stood conversing together during the pause before the next dance.

It was to be a quadrille, and was Jim's, if he chose to claim it; but they were talking of other scenes, and olden days, with the light interest of a boyhood's friendship, and had almost forgotten the dance, when they were interrupted by Colonel O'Neil.

He came up smiling and most complacent, and with him came his companion of the early evening, Mr. Andrew Forde.

"Beatrix," began the Colonel, in a tone of delighted importance, "let me introduce to you Mr. Forde—my daughter," and he waved respectively a hand in the direction of each.

Jim and Godfrey, standing both by Trixie's side, drew back a little, and Mr. Forde stepped in *between* them, and made a grave, courteous bow to the girl.

She acknowledged it with indifference, and looked surprised. She turned away from him immediately, as if her acknow-

ledgment of the introduction had been sufficient, and as if she had no intention of pursuing the acquaintance to any further extent; but Mr. Forde bowed a second time, and said—

"Dancing is not much in my line, Miss O'Neil, but if you will do me the honour of walking through this quadrille——"

"Of course, of course!" exclaimed Colonel O'Neil, answering in her stead; "of course she will. I know, Trixie, you are disengaged."

She glanced up at her father and saw he wished it,—wondered very much within herself,—looked disconsolately at Godfrey, and took Mr. Forde's proffered arm.

He led her away, and they walked through a quadrille,—very literally, he moving with a grave stateliness that was imposing, bending towards his young partner as he touched her hand with much old-fashioned courtesy, smiling upon her the while as graciously as he had smiled ungraciously upon her cousin.

"Immensely wealthy fellow!" exclaimed

the Colonel to the two young men as they stood together and watched the dancers.

"I believe he is," said Goff carelessly. "His father was a tenant on our place, and an uncommon hard-headed fellow. But I hear Forde is a fairish good sort. I think I must make up to him, and claim his acquaintance for auld lang syne."

"Oh, he's a splendid man," continued Trixie's father pompously. "He has a regular show residence, I can tell you, on the Clyde, and a perfect palace, I hear, in Glasgow. Gad! these fellows know how to live."

"That's just what I do not think they do,"—began Godfrey; but the argument was never pursued, for at that moment he caught sight of a fair-haired, muslined little girl, who looked all smiles and recognition at him, and off he went with an aside to Jim—"Why, there's Flossy Seton—a grown-up young lady, I declare! I must go and ask her to dance."

They were waltzing in the supper-room, somebody told him, and he and his delighted

little partner were sympathetic in their horror of a sober quadrille; so away he carried her under the eyes of her complacent mamma to spin to their young hearts' content round the music hall.

"Will you walk through the rooms?" asked Trixie's partner when their dance was finished. "I assure you, Miss O'Neil," he continued, before she had time to reply, "this is a pleasure which I have long desired."

"Indeed!" said Trixie, not knowing very well what to answer, and feeling much surprised.

"Yes. I have seen you many times in Edinburgh; but it is only now an opportunity has offered of being able to know you further than by sight. Will you not come into these rooms?" He was drawing her towards the boudoirs, and felt Trixie's hand on his arm, lightly diverting his course. "We can saunter round by them, you know, to the supper room on the other side."

"Thank you, no," she answered hastily,

feeling that now she had performed her duty, no more moments of this precious ball need be wasted on a partner so unsought for, and so undesired. "I am engaged for this dance to my cousin, Mr. Lindsay," she added. "There he is, waiting for me. I think I must go back to papa and him."

"As you will," he answered quietly, and conducted her, without further comment, to her father's side.

"Jim, this is our dance," she said, dropping Mr. Forde's arm, and putting her hand upon her cousin's with evident relief.

"Is it? come then," he said. "What is it to be? Oh, a waltz. Why, Trixie, you know I am no partner."

She laughed lightly.

"Oh, no; I forgot. Well, never mind, Jim; I have danced quite enough. I had much rather rest. Let us go somewhere out of the confusion, and sit down."

He led her slowly through the crowd, looking straight before him, not into her face, feeling her hand on his arm lying so near his heart — his broken heart — that

felt so hard, so embittered, so full of black, unbeauteous thoughts towards every creature upon God's earth. He wondered what he should say to her now they were alone in the crowd. He resolved quickly,—and as he sat down beside her he turned his towards her eyes grave and sorrowful, but quite controlled.

She looked into his face, and the radiant brightness was clouded upon hers.

"Jim, you do not look yourself to-night. I did not observe it before. Has anything vexed you? Nothing wrong at home?"

He shook his head.

"No, they are all right; but I am rather down, Trixie. I cannot get myself quite up to the mark to-night."

"What is the matter? Tell me. Dear old Jim, what has vexed you?" she continued in a voice of real concern.

"I had a telegram just before I came here," he said.

"What! no bad news, I hope? Not for Margie, Jim? Robert Deane! Oh, tell me!"

"No, it is nothing about them; it is only myself who is concerned. I'm going off again in a day or two, Trix."

"Jim! In a day or two!"

"Yes, the day after to-morrow, or thereabouts, and I do feel a little down. May I come out in the morning, and see you, Trixie? I should like a few words together before I go."

"Of course, Jim. Come as early as you like. Oh, I am so sorry! I am so really grieved!"

And she looked into his face again with eyes so soft and so full of real regret, that Jim felt a sharp thrill for a moment, almost as if she were his own Trixie again to him, and as if that other look into that other face had been a dream.

But no! Here it came in verity again.

Godfrey, tired of his little partner, wandered about the rooms in search of the other two; and at last he spied them, came and joined them in their corner, sat down at Trixie's other side, and chattered ceaselessly; and presently the regretful eyes were turned

away from Jim, and fixed themselves on the other face, and brightened and softened and glistened again with joy and tenderness and love.

Jim soon found some excuse, and got up and left them alone. The glittering ball-room scene seemed to mock him too painfully, and in a few minutes he turned from it in bitterness, walked out into the dark street, and went towards his home.

CHAPTER VI.

"WHAT HAVE I LEFT, OF THEE BEREFT?"

THE wind blew sharply in his face. It was daybreak on a September morning, the night was rolling back from the sky in huge inky clouds, the dawn creeping in grey lines up the eastern horizon. A drenching rain came driving into his face as he walked westward. He saw the lamplight along the dreary breadth and length of George Street, growing pale in the breaking dawn; he saw the dome of St. George's Church stand out darkly against the clouds. He turned down into Castle Street, and went past his own house straight on till he reached the corner, and faced the Castle Rock, and then he turned westward again along Prince's Street, and walked on against the drifting wind

and rain, all unconscious of where he was going, or of why he went.

His brain felt stunned, and the cold rain dashing against his forehead seemed to do him good. The ball, with its dazzling crowd, seemed to torture his memory, the strain of waltz-music came ceaselessly ringing into his ears, and amid all, those haunting looks on Trixie's radiant face, those accents in her tones, that sparkling, joyous intercourse he had been forced to witness between Godfrey and her. Again and again it all came back to him, with the burden of its hideous tale. She did not love *him!* he need not ask her love. It was gone from her long ago. The thought drove him madly along, and strong, bitter, angry feelings came surging up within him. His whole heart and character were changed and soured, and poisoned for the hour as he hurried through the storm and darkness, in gloomy wrath against himself and all the world. They had deceived him. He hated every one of them, he muttered. Yes, he hated her; he hated Godfrey, and could

have killed him; he hated himself most darkly of all. What a fool he had been! To his stern, single-hearted nature, the shock of a deception practised on him as he thought by those near and so very dear to him came with a crashing power that subverted the whole machinery of life. It all seemed warped and broken for him, and life seemed worthless on such terms, work aimless and without hope. Who was there to work for? he thought—who in this treacherous world was worth a single effort or the devoted labour of one hour? He would throw it up, he muttered, turn his face from the battle, and give way. The strong, dark passion came breaking over him all the more utterly now for the strong control in which he had held it in the ball-room, and he yielded himself completely for the time being to the paroxysms of fierce agony with all the dark sins of despair. Hatred and anger against all of them held him, heart, brain, and soul, in their bitter power.

He turned suddenly, he scarce knew why,

some two miles on the road to Glasgow, and set his face homewards again. He reached Castle Street, and let himself in with his latch-key, and crept noiselessly up-stairs. He passed the first landing, and went into his own bedroom, and shut fast the door. It was still only struggling daylight. He threw off his wet greatcoat, he glanced at his bed, but felt it was hopeless to lie down on it. He thought with thankfulness that his room was above the drawing-room, and not over the apartment where his mother slept; so he might pace up and down in his restless misery without fearing to awake her.

He could not sit still. From end to end of his apartment his step went backwards and forwards with a sharp, impatient tread, and down-stairs in the drawing-room Margie heard it. She had sat through the whole long night, waiting to receive her brother's confidence when he came home.

She had had happy hours of her own as she waited; for she had a long letter to answer from Robert; and letters to and

from him were full of hope and cheerfulness now. She had told Jim that she would wait for him, and the first thing that surprised her was his passing the landing without turning in.

She still waited. He might have forgotten his promise, she thought; so if she would not disturb him, he might come down again.

She waited. Evidently he was not coming, and as evidently he had not gone to bed. She heard his tread, backwards and forwards, up and down the room, heavy, restless, unceasing.

What could it mean? At all events she need not wait for him; she might go to bed. Would she break in upon him? She could not decide. She paused a moment in the drawing-room, candle in hand, and listened, and the tread stopped suddenly—there was no more sound. He was going to rest, then; she might as well go too.

She slept in the room behind his, and she had to pass his doorway to reach her own. Instinctively she paused at it, and listened

again, and she shivered instantly with pain. In the soundless daybreak, as she stood there, she distinctly heard the long, deep-drawn sobs that come only from the breaking heart of a strong man.

Marjory trembled, and a little sorrowful moan broke from her—"Poor Jim! Poor Jim!"

She could not go on to her room, and leave him thus. He *might* be angry perhaps, and order her away but still she must go in to him.

She opened the door very gently and looked in. Jim did not hear her. He sat at his writing-table now, his face covered with his hands, struggling fiercely with himself to recover his manliness, and to be dark, and hard, and bitter again. But he had broken down now, and it had all overflooded the banks of his self-control.

"Jamie, Jamie!" she came closer to him, and put her hand on his shoulder, then on his rough brown hair.

"Go away!" he cried to her.

"Jamie, I cannot go. Let me stay by you —let me stay, Jamie!"

He said nothing for a minute, but fierce sobbing still shook his frame. At length he looked up.

"Margie, what a fool you will think me!" he said, in bitter anger with himself.

She did not answer him, but looked into his pale, stained face, and at the dark lines of suffering round his eyes.

"Jamie," she continued softly, "can it be possible?"

He knew what she meant.

"Margie, it is all one great, hideous, horrible mistake!"

"What?" she answered.

"A mistake. I've been deceived this whole summer through. She never cared for me, she never thought of me. Oh, it was too cruel—of her, of you, of all—all, to let me be fooled and deluded so!"

"Jamie, dear, I said I could not answer for her. But are you sure *now*—has she said all this? Was that her reply?"

"I never asked her," he said gloomily.

"Never asked her? What can you mean?"

"You *must* know. You have all been deceiving me. Godfrey Hamilton was there, Margie—now you know what I mean."

Marjory's face grew a shade paler if possible, and she sat down on a seat near him, and gasped a moment in her surprise.

"Godfrey Hamilton! What about him? I vow to you, Jamie, I do not know."

"He was there," continued Jim, "and he loves her, and she loves him. They belong to each other. I saw it—I saw it, Margie! O God, help me, my heart is breaking!"

Marjory was almost speechless with dismay.

"How extraordinary!" she said at length. "That visit, just those few days, did that do it all? and she never spoke of him! Why, Jamie, you have been much more at Sea Grange than I have; did you hear nothing to make you suspect?"

"I never heard his name from her," he exclaimed. "I heard my uncle gabble about that visit, and about Lord Clarenleigh, and I have heard Aunt Helen speak

of Lady Marian, but in no special way. Oh, they all plotted to deceive me!"

"Impossible, Jim. Did you never hear them mention Godfrey?"

"Of course, I asked them about him, when I came home, just as I asked you, and my uncle said several things; and Trixie —God forgive her! — she sat there. I can remember her looking away, as her father was speaking, just as if she didn't care."

"You must forgive her, Jim. I do not think she meant to give you this pain."

"She did," said Jim fiercely, "she did! She has just played with me, and she has fooled me. I think I hate her, Margie!"

"Jim, Jim!"

"Oh, you do not know my black, horrid thoughts—you do not know what sweet hours I can look back to with her, and now,—I must go off without her,—quite alone! Oh, my little, beautiful darling, how I have loved her! And now—O my God—I must break my life away from her, and live it out in hideous misery alone!"

His heart softened for the moment towards the memory of Trixie, and his emotion overcame him again.

"Are you quite sure about it?" said Margie at last.

"Quite," he said. "He loves her, and she worships him. They understand each other; it is all settled between them, Margie, there is no sort of doubt."

"My poor Jamie!"

"Do not pity me," he cried, "or I shall go mad! Be hard to me, Margie, for heaven's sake, and help me to harden myself."

"Do not harden, Jamie; it does no good."

"God help me!" he groaned. "Oh, the loneliness, the bitterness of it! Margie, will you help me to be ready; I am going away to-morrow."

"So soon, dear?"

"Yes, I must—I must. I cannot see them together again. Let him have her, and God make them happy—but I cannot see them again."

"Perhaps it is better that you should go.

But try—try to feel softened to her—do not leave us in anger, dear. You must be still her brother and her friend."

"Brother! friend! That's the horrid rubbish you women talk to a man when he is beside himself with misery. Do you think I could stand there and see another man have her, and be satisfied with a milk-and-water, make-believe at brotherhood and friendship for myself? No, no! I must go out of the sight of her, and the memory of her, and strive to crush her out of my life. God have mercy upon me, it will be black and desert-like enough when she is gone!"

"Will you see her again at all, Jamie?"

"I do not know," he answered. "At the ball I promised I would just once—to-morrow—to-day, I mean, for it is morning now. But since then, Margie, this sort of madness has come over me, and I do not know what I may do."

"Lie down, dear, and try to rest."

"It is no good!" he cried. "Oh, Margie, Margie, and you have misery enough of

your own to bear, without having the burden of mine. O God! I think there is a curse upon us!"

"No, no, Jamie," she answered softly; "no curse, no curse!"

"No blessing, I'm sure," he answered darkly. "If there is a God in heaven, He has deceived me too! quickening me to efforts and to duty with a mocking promise of prosperity and reward. Why have I been such a fool? Why have I not spent my life like other fellows? Why have I slaved and slaved, satisfied with the sense of right-doing upon me, just to be crushed like this at the end?"

"Not the end yet, dear. The reward may be yet to come."

"Not for me," he cried again. "It is the end of everything for me; nothing but clouds and blackness, and a dreary desert of a life. Oh, I'll give it up altogether! I hate every one—I hate it all!"

"Jamie, Jamie dear!" she murmured tenderly.

"Why do *you* bear it, Margie?" he said,

looking suddenly up at her; "it has been all just as bad for you."

"Women must bear many things," she said gently. "Perhaps they have the power of bearing better than men; at all events, pain comes to them more naturally. Besides," she continued, "it is so much better now, dear, for me."

"Bad enough yet. It *is* a curse, Marjory!"

"No curse," she repeated again. "'Unto the righteous shall arise light in the darkness.' Remember it, Jamie; keep the words. I will leave them with you, and think of it, and soften your heart to her. Take the cross, and be humble with it—and oh, it will indeed grow bright and sweet. Try to rest, dear, and I will go."

She stooped and kissed his forehead and went away to her own room, and left him. And she brought him, when she was alone again, just to the same place where she had carried her Robert, and leaving him there in confidence, she found comfort and hope.

Margory had great trust in Jim's strong moral balance, and in his straight, clear-seeing mind; and it was not misplaced.

She had not long left him, when he cast himself on his bed, and slept a few hours from sheer exhaustion of body and brain, and he awoke with the sunshine flooding in upon him, still indeed in pain and sadness, but in calm and full possession of himself.

The thought of Trixie came to him, with no anger in its bitterness now. The memory of the whole circumstance came clearly to him; now their peculiar nature became evident, and Trixie's position forcing itself upon him, made him almost forgetful of his own.

"If Aunt Helen and his uncle were also not aware of the state of matters," he reflected; "if *they* had not been drawing him on delusively" (which he could scarcely believe), "what did all this secret understanding between her and Godfrey mean?"

Jim had long ago understood the drift of Aunt Helen's wishes, and it seemed impossible to him, now he saw it clearly, that

she could have had a knowledge of this other affair.

His face darkened as he reflected on it, and the true state of matters became evident to his eyes. What was Godfrey doing? he thought angrily. What kind of footing was this on which he stood to Trixie, all unknown to her protectors and friends?

He finished dressing hastily, and before going down-stairs he called Margie to his room.

He was himself again, she saw at one glance into his face. He was pale and haggard, with dark rings still round his eyes, but his usual expression had returned to him, grave and gentle, stern and kind.

"Margie," he said, "do not worry the mother about this; tell her, of course, in your own way, that it is all over, and she will soon, no doubt, know the truth. But do not tell her how it cuts me up—*she* need not be made unhappy."

"Very well. I dare say it is best."

"Of course it is. About the rest, Margie, I am going to-morrow. Will you get my

things to rights? And—I'm going out to Sea Grange after breakfast, and probably to see Godfrey Hamilton in the afternoon."

"My brave Jim!"

"Yes; I do not want to leave any of them in bitterness. And Margie, do not think of what I said last night. She never meant it, God bless her! I am sure she never did. And I love her, Margie, I love her now, and I am sure I shall love her when I'm dying—God knows how bitterly, how well! But never mind all that. What I want to say is,—that I must come to the root of this affair. You see, my uncle is not very far-seeing, and Trixie's brothers are so young, and Goff Hamilton was a thoughtless fellow in old days. I should like to satisfy my own mind as to what he is now. Do you understand, Margie?"

"I understand perfectly, dear. I think you are right," she added, wondering at his calmness and nerve.

"Well, let us have breakfast, and I shall go."

CHAPTER VII.

"ONE FACE ONCE MET ME IN THE CROWD OF LIFE."

SEVERAL things happened that day.

First of all, while Colonel O'Neil was reading the newspaper at the Club in the afternoon, airing his legs before the fire, a card was brought to him with a name on it that caused him pleasant surprise.

"Gentleman waiting in the private sitting-room, sir," said the servant as he extended the salver.

"Mr. Andrew Forde," read Colonel O'Neil; "very civil, upon my honour! Delighted to see him—highly gratified," he continued, addressing the servant confidentially, as if he personified Mr. Forde.

"Forde is a shrewd fellow," he soliloquized as he left the room, "il connaît son monde! Knows good company when he meets it,—recognises the man of the world at a glance—shrewd fellow!"

He almost finished his reflections in the ship-builder's presence.

More hereafter of Andrew Forde. Of his character, with its lights and shadows, its tendencies, its possibilities, its weakness, and its strength; of his history, and the varied undulations of fate by which he had rolled into his position of wealth and dignity,—more hereafter. At present, let me simply introduce him as he appeared to the gratified Colonel O'Neil, when, a few days ago, that gentleman was informed by a mutual Club friend that the great millionaire Forde wished for his acquaintance. They were presented to each other by their mutual friend. Colonel O'Neil, bland and full of gratified delight; Mr. Forde, pompous and cold, but evidently desirous of being benignant and agreeable. He had spent time and pains during these few days in cultivating

the Colonel, crowning his attention now by this formal visit; and Colonel O'Neil, though much flattered, was by no means surprised. He suspected no ulterior motive, and saw no cause for conceiving one. He considered himself and his acquaintance worth any trouble in cultivation, and was not in the least astonished that a man of Mr. Forde's intellectual capacity should concur with him in this view. He did not resent the millionaire's patronage, for he did not see it. Mr. Forde's manner he thought quite conformable to his background of uncounted gold. The forced graciousness of the rich man never jarred him, for he accepted every one of these cold efforts at benignity as so many tributes to the charm of his own society and to the attractions of—himself: a flattering impression, of which he was destined to be roughly disabused.

To-day as he came into the Club drawing-room, Andrew Forde stood upright on the rug, his back turned to the fire, his head held high as Colonel O'Neil entered, and lowered only for a moment in dignified

acknowledgment of the Colonel's profuse salaams.

"Good afternoon, sir," he said.

"How d'ye do?" responded the Colonel. "I am delighted to see you. Quite fresh, I hope, after our little dissipations of last night."

"Quite well, I thank you. Will you be seated, sir?" and Mr. Forde waved the Colonel majestically to a chair.

"Ah, thank ye! Charmed to have a chat. Deuced little doing in these days in Edinburgh. September is our dullest time; after this Caledonian flare-up is over, we die away into complete quiescence till January. I suppose you have only come over to the ball?"

"I generally pass these months of autumn on the Clyde," said Mr. Forde. "No city presents much attraction just now; it is the time to enjoy the country."

"Quite so, quite so," responded the Colonel. "You return then, I imagine, immediately to——"

"Torrondale—Torrondale Castle is the

name of my place. No; if certain matters arrange themselves as I *anticipate*, I intend remaining at least some days in Edinburgh."

"Ah, indeed!" and there was a pause which the Colonel, feeling it was his function to be agreeable, strove to fill up with pleasant though perhaps trivial remarks, calculated to show off his graceful conversational powers. But Mr. Forde declined to be responsive. He was curt, absent, impatient in his replies, and at length, after some minutes of ill-sustained colloquy, he broke roughly into the middle of one of the Colonel's best-turned remarks.

"Colonel O'Neil," he said, "my visit to you this afternoon has a special object, and one into which I had better enter without delay, before we give ourselves the trouble of pursuing our acquaintance further."

"Quite so," exclaimed the Colonel with ready assent.

"I am a man of business," Mr. Forde continued again, speaking in a hard, dry tone, with his eyes fixed coldly upon his com-

panion's face; "I am a man of business, Colonel O'Neil. I have succeeded in business, by going always straight to the point at which I aimed, and by appropriating to myself the object I pursued by the concentration of energy with the smallest possible waste of language, and the shortest possible delay. I propose to deal with you, in the present instance, with my usual promptitude."

"Exactly—exactly," assented the Colonel, feeling very much as if Mr. Forde were arraigning him to a criminal court for some offence, and was announcing his intention to dispose of him with all possible rapidity.

"Well, sir, to the point. It may perhaps interest you to hear that, some months ago, I, going accidentally one afternoon to the annual picture exhibition in the building on the Mound, encountered there, as I walked among the crowd, a countenance that awoke in me sentiments to which I have hitherto been a stranger. Throughout a life immersed in business, Colonel O'Neil, I have always nursed an ideal of a haven from my toil. I have always promised

myself that when wealth once crowned my efforts, and my house was set in order, with the state and luxury to which I aspired, that I should cease from my labours, turn my thoughts to politics, and, moreover, pluck the fairest flower I could find in my path, to adorn the house I have established, and to be its ornament and its pride. I have been fastidious in all things, and so I have generally managed to secure of everything the best. Now only my drawing-rooms are vacant, awaiting my choice to fill them, and what I wish to tell you, sir, is a fact that may surprise you not a little. After hovering in that selection over many fair *proffered* flowers, I have fixed my desire upon that countenance I met in the picture-gallery, and that, sir,—let me tell you without further preamble,—was the countenance of —your daughter."

Colonel O'Neil sprang to his feet, speechless for a moment with surprise; he opened his mouth, and looked vacantly at Mr. Forde, while a confusion of feelings contended in his breast.

During the harangue (unsensitive as he was), a vague sentiment of disgust had at last arisen within him, at the calm supercilious patronage with which the ship-builder had looked from his golden eminence upon the whole flower-garden of beauty and youth, and when the climax came, at the mention of his own daughter, he had sprung up with the exclamation trembling angrily upon his lips of, "Go to the devil, sir, and your money with you!" But, on second thoughts, he suppressed it.

Forty thousand a-year stood incarnate before him, insinuating a demand for his daughter's hand. He suppressed his sensation, and the ship-builder went on.

"I like to treat all things in a cool business-like manner, sir. I think your daughter very beautiful, she would be an ornament to a house of any calibre."

"Indeed!" said Colonel O'Neil. "You're very good."

"Indeed, I think so. I found on introduction that her manners are quite equal to

her looks, touched certainly with a degree of repellant dignity; but that style of address is not, perhaps, displeasing to us in a lovely woman."

"Indeed!" was still all the Colonel could find to say.

"Yes; in fact, as far as I know her, she suits me in every way, so I have made up my mind. The next step is with you, sir. My terms, my settlements, I mean to say, will be in every respect sufficiently elastic to meet the highest demands I apprehend from you. You can consider you own views on that subject, and I will draw out a rough draft of mine. And,—this understood between us,—I will call at your residence, and ask your daughter in marriage from herself, and without delay."

"You do us high honour, sir," said Colonel O'Neil, afraid to offend the millionaire by a word, and yet (sycophant as he was) strongly inclined to knock the man down. "Really, in my daughter's name, and in my own, I cannot find words to express sufficiently my sense of your,—condescension."

Mr. Forde waved his hand.

"I have considered all that," he said. "I have made my choice. I might have looked higher for rank and title perhaps, but, in fact,—I've made up my mind."

"Confound the fellow!" muttered the Colonel, under his breath, roused at length to something like indignation; but Mr. Forde had drawn himself straight up again at this juncture, and was looking away over the Colonel's head across the room, so the execration escaped him, and he went on.

"Of course, I do not wish to hurry an immediate decision as to settlements, on your side. You will find me liberal; indeed, I may insinuate that you will probably find the arrangement attended with pecuniary advantage even to yourself. On the advantages to your daughter, I need not enlarge."

"Sir!" began Colonel O'Neil, at length roused to the verge of an outburst. "Sir!" But he was not allowed to speak.

"Stop," said Mr. Forde again, "do not

answer one word at present. I like everything to be done in my affairs in a regular routine and business-like way. The next step is not your speech, but, your reflection. Consider what I have said, draw up a note of your ideas on settlements, and communicate with me as soon as these ideas are matured; I am not impatient."

And he bowed pompously again, as if he considered the interview to be concluded, and Colonel O'Neil to be dismissed from the "presence," for the time being.

"Mr. Forde," said the Colonel, looking up at him, and soothing himself down as he proceeded, by the thought—"forty thousand a-year;" "Mr. Forde, the subject you have broached certainly requires reflection."

"Quite right, quite right," said the rich man. "Do nothing hurriedly,—that is a great rule. Reflect, sir, and let me hear from you as soon as may be."

And he waved his visitor away with a distant dignity that was irresistible, and Colonel O'Neil found himself outside the door,—positively dismissed; his mind a

curious *mélange* of rage and elation, as he strove to separate therein the splendour of Mr. Forde's proposal from the arrogant insolence with which it had been made.

CHAPTER VIII.

STOLEN SWEETS.

JIM went out to Sea Grange. Trixie was in the garden, they told him; Aunt Helen sat in the red parlour alone.

He came close to her chair by the window, and sat down by her, and spent some minutes, as they exchanged some trivial words, in watching the frail outline of her aged features, and in silently thinking he was taking of them a last farewell.

The dear old face (so pale and wizened now), that had ever softened, as it turned on *him*, into love; the deep-set eyes, whose keen grey flash had ever melted as they rested on his face.

It was for the last time, he felt, that he sat by Aunt Helen's chair.

"I have had my recall, aunt," he said at last, "and it is a very sudden one."

"Ah, James, must you leave us soon?"

"Very soon," he answered; "so soon as to-morrow."

"James!" she turned on him, and quick tears welled up into her eyes.

"Yes, aunt, I must go. Sooner or later, you know, it would have been, so it is as well to-morrow as any day."

"Well, well! So it must be then. God bless and keep you safe, my boy. But, James,—Trixie,—have you told her?"

"I am going out to tell her now," he said, rising; "I will come and finish our talk again."

"Yes, yes, go to her!" exclaimed the old lady eagerly. "She is in the garden, you will find her there, James," she added, catching his hand for a moment; "you know, and I know, what we both wish. Am I wrong?"

His cheek grew suddenly pale, and he turned from her.

"Dear aunt," he said, "let us talk again later. Let me go to her now."

"Yes, yes, go James. But come back to me when,—you know what I mean, when it is over, James, when it is all over, dear."

"Yes, yes," he assented absently, "when it is all over, I will come."

He left the room, and went in search of Trixie.

It was the early afternoon now, time had began so late for all of them that day. Trixie was picking autumn flowers in the garden, and came up the walk towards him, with a basket of carnations in her hand. She extended one to him immediately as he came near, and looked up into his face with a flush, richer than any carnation, upon her cheek.

She looked radiantly lovely this afternoon, her eyes soft and flashing, her smile bright, and full of feeling and joy. She had not looked into any future yet, no clear prospects for her and Godfrey had been opened up, but she was still simply wrapt in the sense of his presence lingering with her,

from the night before; and all fresh and thrilling again was her pleasure in his smile, and his words, and all glorious her joy in his love.

Jim looked at her in silence for a moment, sharp throbs of pain shooting through his heart the while, as he saw her radiant happiness, and as he acknowledged to himself she had never looked so fair as she seemed, standing before him now.

She was all only happiness too, for she had quite forgotten Jim had told her he was going away, so she said nothing to him about it.

"I am going over to the Hamiltons, Trixie," he said, "will you walk with me to the boundary burn?"

"Yes, Jim, with pleasure."

"Let us start then. Which way shall we go—by the upper road or the lower?"

"Oh, let us go the upper road, Jim; it is the dullest to walk alone, and I can leave you by the stile, you know, and come back through the woods by myself."

"Very well;" and they walked a few

yards in silence. They passed out of the private gardens of Sea Grange, and on to the field-track beyond, and when they were quite away there, Jim turned suddenly to Trixie, and stopped her in the path. She looked up at him surprised.

"Trixie," he said very quietly, turning his eyes full upon her face, "why did you never speak of Godfrey Hamilton to me?"

Her gaze fell instantly, and the colour deepened on her cheek. Then she looked up shyly at him again, as he waited for her answer, and she whispered, "I could not speak of him—I could not. Besides"—she went on, for he said nothing—"besides—oh, Jim!" she raised her eyes pleadingly to his now, as if she expected him to scold her, and his heart beat fiercely and strangely as her gaze rested upon his face.

"Besides, it was a secret," he answered quietly. "Trixie, I have read your secret now."

"Have you—oh, Jim, have you guessed it?" she exclaimed, and her voice became agitated with excitement and dismay.

"Jim, dear Jim, you will not tell—you will keep my secret; you will not tell any one that you have found it out?"

"I will tell one person," he said sternly, "and that without delay."

"Who? oh, Jim, not auntie, or papa, or Lady Marian? oh, if any of them should find it out, how dreadful! what would Godfrey say?"

"What, indeed!" said Jim drily. "No, Trixie, it is not my place to tell any of them. There is just one person with whom I am going to speak about your secret, and I am going straight to him now."

"Oh, who is it, Jim?"

"Who but Godfrey himself?" Jim answered. "I think he is the person most concerned. Come, Trixie, walk on with me if you are coming: it is getting late, and I have not much time to spare."

"Oh, Jim, Jim, what will he say? He will think I have told you; and,—oh, it is dreadful!"

And she walked on beside him in continued agitation the whole way to the

boundary burn, now begging him to say nothing, now overcome again at the thoughts of the terrible things Godfrey might say or do; and Jim walked quietly beside her, with calm determination on his face, and with a great bitterness within him, because she never once remembered to speak of his going away.

At the boundary burn they separated, he going onward across the park and river to the Craig, she turning homewards by the wood walk to Sea Grange.

It was a lovely afternoon, soft, dewy, and mild. The autumn tints were bright and varied on the leaves of the beech and hazel, and the path along which Trixie walked was strewed with a soft carpet of gold. The berries of the rowan hung in rich, scarlet clusters above her head, and the sweet, aromatic odour of the autumn woods filled the air.

She sauntered slowly along, full of happiness, but also full of concern; that terrible interview between Jim and Godfrey made her very anxious. She thought Goff might

be angry with her—might love her no more. She felt sadly apprehensive of the consequences, but it never occurred to her to resist or to question the authority of Jim.

She walked along full of contending feelings — the dazzling memory of the ball still clinging to her, the deep tones of Godfrey's voice still haunting her ear, the bright glance of his eyes still vibrating in her heart.

And as she walked along, thinking all her girlish thoughts about him, throwing up the golden-leaf carpet lazily with her foot, gazing up from time to time in her heart's fulness to the scarlet rowans and the bits of autumn sky, she heard suddenly a dog's bark, and she looked straight before her, to see, what made her heart beat fast, and brought the colour rushing into her cheeks—a pair of coupled pointers, a pile of pheasants and hares, a gun leaning idly against the stile that separates Sea Grange from the Craig, a cloud of cigar smoke curling into the air, and a tall figure,

in grey knickerbockers and a shooting-jacket, sitting on the rails—Godfrey—in placid repose, after a day's hard shooting in the covers, and a long walk through his woods.

He tossed his cigar away as he saw her, and came forward to meet her with a long stride, tossing up the golden leaves before him on the path.

Trixie stopped as he drew near, and looked shyly round her, as if she would have run away, but he came close up to her, and took her into his arms with eager tenderness, in his old, impetuous, unceremonious manner.

"You little darling, to come out here and meet me."

"Godfrey, I did not think, you know, that you would be here."

"No, of course you didn't; how should you know? But it is the most blessed bit of chance conceivable. I was just sitting there, racking my brains how the deuce I was to get at you, and now,——"

"Godfrey, Godfrey, stop! listen to me,"

she said suddenly; "the most dreadful thing has happened!"

"What? you little absurd darling! how lachrymose you look, Trixie! What has occurred?"

"Oh, Goffy, Jim has found everything out!"

"The devil he has!" exclaimed Goff. "Cousin Jim!" he added sarcastically; "I'm much obliged to him for poking his nose into my affairs."

"Godfrey, Godfrey, do not be angry. There, now, I told him you would. I am so sorry!"

"You told him I would be angry, did you? Confound the thing!"

"Oh, I am so sorry!" and Trixie looked inclined to cry. "How could Jim be so horrid! I thought I loved him once, but I just hate him now!"

"You thought you loved him—you did! At what date did you experience that sensation, Trixie? I've a great mind to pitch into the fellow,—I have."

"Oh, Godfrey, do not say such terrible

things. I knew you would be so angry; and you said you had a reason, and I told him so. Oh, Goffy!"

"Do not be a little goose," he exclaimed. "You dear, beautiful little thing, I hadn't an idea I was so fond of you, Trixie. Look up at me, you pretty child. Do not cry."

"Goffy, I cannot help it."

"Of course you cannot. Well, come over here and sit down with me—look, on this bit of rock. That's it; sit there; the grass is damp. And now, Trixie, let us hear all about this terrible business."

And he threw himself at full length beside her, and fixed his eyes upon her rich, blushing face.

"Oh, it is only Jim, you know, Goffy," she began.

"Well, Jim used to be a good sort in old days," said Godfrey. "What's he cutting up rough about now?"

"I do not know. He seemed angry," said Trixie. "He looked stern and grave, and said he would go over and speak to you about it."

"Oh, he did, did he? and when is our interview to come off? the sooner the better, since Jim will assume to himself the office of stern parent."

"He is gone now," said Trixie.

"Now! what over to the Craig?"

"Yes, I walked with him to the burn," said Trixie, "and he went on, while I came home this way."

"Well, that is odd! I've just missed him, and got my little cup of stolen sweets again, instead of a paternal lecture from Jim. Well, that's not bad, I declare."

And he threw himself back, and laughed merrily.

"And what is the appalling James going to say to us, Trixie?"

"I do not know," said Trixie; "he only said he was going to speak to you."

"Ah!" and Godfrey reflected a moment. "Well, the affair will look fishy enough, I dare say, if I'm not sharp about it now," he went on. "Jim is going to speak to me, is he? Well, the only thing I can do is to be beforehand with him, and speak to him.

Will you kindly give him my compliments next time you see him, and tell him I crave the honour of an interview to make an important revelation to him, and perhaps he had better keep his wigging until my speech is over. By-the-bye, I suppose Mr. James Lindsay will not object to my informing my mother and your papa of our engagement, even before I communicate with him, will he?"

She coloured deeply again.

"Our engagement—oh, Godfrey, need it not be a secret then any more? Oh, I am so glad!"

"It cannot be a secret—it's out! so it may as well sail forth with dignity," he answered; "but I am sorry, Trixie; I shall not enjoy you half so much now that we descend into the commonplaces; I like stolen sweets so much the best."

"How do you mean, Godfrey—what do you call stolen sweets?"

"Oh, child, there are such lots of them, and I adore them all. Let me see—race-horses are stolen sweets, and runs to Baden

are stolen sweets, and heaps and heaps of nice things I could not describe to you; and you have been a stolen sweet, you dear little darling, and I have cared fifty times more for you in consequence, Trixie."

"Will you not care for me now?" she asked him wistfully.

"You absurd child, of course I will; but there will be a cut-and-dryness about it, and an Eden-forbidden-fruit sort of flavour will pass away. But never mind, I daresay we shall be very jolly after all."

And he threw his arm round her as he spoke, and drew her closer to him, and looked lovingly into her face.

"I wonder how you got hold of me, you little thing," he said; "you've done it surely enough, and no mistake. Look up at me, Trixie, and tell me you love me again, like you did that morning by the lake."

She did look up at him, and with such a look, that there was no need for words; and Goff felt wildly happy, and very conscious again that for all these past months he had been a fool.

"But I want to come to the bottom of this," he exclaimed at last, with pretended gravity. "What is the meaning of this terrible Master Jim's anxiety about our concerns? I think I saw to the key of it last night. You've been a naughty Trixie; you've been flirting away like anything, and you've made a big hole in Cousin Jim's most estimable heart!"

"Oh, Godfrey, no, I have not."

"Yes, you have; I saw it all. *He* is not the only fellow that can see through a brick wall," continued Goff sagaciously. "I saw through him like a telescope. He is terribly hard hit. Poor fellow, I'm sorry for him."

"Godfrey, what can you mean?"

"Why, he would like to have you, little one, if you were not bespoke; and I'll tell you what it is, you would do much better to shelve me, Trixie, and go home and marry Cousin Jim!"

"Godfrey, do be quiet," she urged.

"I am right, Trixie," he repeated with real gravity. "Jim Lindsay is worth *ten* of me!"

And Goff never spoke a truer word.

"How can you?" Trixie answered him. "Dear old Jim, of course he is a good fellow, of course I am fond of him; but you —oh, Goffy," she could only add, "it is *so* different."

"I hope it is," he said carelessly; "I do not think I need begin to be jealous yet, Trix."

She smiled up at him again, and said, "Goffy, I must go; it is getting late."

"Very well. Good-bye, darling, my own beautiful little one. Good-bye. I must make it right with my mother this evening, and then to-morrow I'll come over and square it with everybody at your place. But, stop a minute, Jim is an old friend, Trixie; I do not like him to think shabby things of me. Look here."

And he took a note-book from his pocket, and wrote a few words on one page.

"Here," he continued, tearing it out, and handing it to her, "give that to Jim. Will it do?"

She looked down and read, b

understood the words: "All on the square Jim, old boy. Don't you fear. I'll bring my mother to see her to-morrow. N.B. 1. —Is she not a darling? N.B. 2.—You are the regular old brick you always were."

"Goffy, what a funny note!"

"Never mind, he will understand. And, my pretty one, run home now, or they will all be down upon us—'James,' 'parients,' and all concentrated essences of propriety, in a heap! Good night."

CHAPTER IX.

"FRIEND FOR EVER."

TRIXIE went home, crossing the fields again, and getting down upon Sea Grange; and just at the wicket-gate, leading into the garden, she encountered Jim.

It was growing dusk now, the autumn daylight fading, the evening beginning to fall, and Jim was evidently watching for her, leaning on the top bar of the gate, and looking along the path by which she came.

"You have been a long time coming home, Trixie," he said to her. "I have been waiting for you here. I would not go in and tell Aunt Helen that I had lost you in the wood."

"I met Godfrey," replied Trixie simply, "and, Jim, he sent this to you."

Jim read the little message, and his face cleared. Then *she* was going to be happy; and he had only his own pain and bitterness to bear.

He looked up, and smiled at her, and pushed the wicket open for her to come through.

"It is all settled then, Trixie, and you are going to be the lady of the Craig? Well, I cannot make speeches, you know. What is the right thing to say?"

"Oh, do not say anything of that kind, Jim. I do not know what is going to be yet, it all frightens me very much. It does not seem real at all yet, only I know I am so very very happy."

Jim turned away.

"I shall like to think of you happy, at all events, all these days when I am gone."

"When you are gone? Oh, Jim!" and she suddenly coloured, and her eyes filled with tears. "Oh, Jim! what must you think of me! how horrid, how selfish I am! I quite forgot what you told me last night;

but it is not true, is it? You are not really going away?"

"To-morrow," he said curtly.

"Oh, how dreadful! To-morrow—really to-morrow? And this is to be our last evening walk, and last talk together. Oh, Jim, I am so grieved!"

"Thank you," he answered. He was looking away from her, afraid to let his eyes rest a moment upon her face, for he had set his mind to take his secret away with him.

"Jim, I cannot tell you how sorry I feel. And the more happy I am about other things, the more sad I am to lose you. I seem to want you just now so very much."

"You will find my place filled up, Trixie. Under the circumstances, you will not miss me long."

"Oh yes, I will. I shall always miss you, Jim. I think if I had several Godfreys even, and everything else I could wish in the world, I should still miss you."

"I doubt it," said Jim.

"Yes, I should. Listen, Jim, I want to say something to you, and I do not quite

know how to put it. I want to tell you that I think I owe a great deal to you. You have said so many things to me that I shall never forget. You have made me think of so many things that I never thought of before, and you have made me altogether different from what I was before you came. Indeed, Jim, do you know, I don't think I should ever have been so good a wife for Godfrey as I hope to be now, if you had never been my friend."

"So you consider me your friend?" he said, bitterness gnawing fiercely at his heart.

"Yes, Jim; my own particular friend. I think a great deal that is new in my character comes from you," she answered with demure sobriety; for she was feeling very gravely towards the prospects of her new position now,—full of resolves for the new future, full of appreciation and gratitude for the views of life and its responsibilities given her by Jim.

"You will find me steadied down into a very sober matron when you come back again, and you will know that it is all due

to you. Indeed, I am going to be very thoughtful and good. I have often teased you about your principles, Jim, but I always believed every word you said."

He scarcely knew how to answer her, he felt so dark; but she went on suddenly again, after a moment's pause, before he spoke. She stopped him in the pathway too, where they were pacing up and down, and took his hand in both of hers, and looked straight up into his face, and he was forced to look down upon her.

He saw her cheeks were crimson and feverish; her eyes brilliant with excitement; he looked at her in silence. Poor little passionate, impetuous child, he thought to himself, God help her and protect her, with all that smouldering feeling, good and bad, sweet and bitter, kindling and burning all undeveloped in her face.

It was a sudden thought that came over her as she caught his hand.

"Jim," she said, with childish fitfulness, "I do not like to let you go!"

"I must go, Trix," he answered.

She stamped her foot impetuously.

"I hate to let you go, Jim! You know my own brothers are such wild Irish boys, and I never had a brother to myself till I had you; and I do not want to part with you, Jim. I wish you could stay."

"I cannot," he said. "God knows, I cannot do it."

"Well, Jim, I do not know what makes me ask you to-night, but I think it is that everything seems to be so new and unreal, and so strange. But I want you to promise me that you will always, always be my friend."

"Perhaps our ideas of friendship may not always agree, Trixie."

"Yes, they will. Never mind that; promise me, Jim."

"If you ask me I will," he answered; "but only as long as you allow it according to my views of a friend."

"Yes, yes, after your views; that is what I mean; that is what I want, you know, Jim. Godfrey—I love him so."

"Yes."

"But friendship is different. If you will promise me this, I think I'll always feel it round me, strong, and keeping me safe. For I am so young, and oh, I am so very much afraid. Will you always do just as you have always done, take care of me, Jim?"

"Yes," he answered, "so help me God, I will."

"And you will write to me?"

"I will always answer when you write to me," he replied; "if Goff allows me, that's to say."

"Oh, he will, he is not so silly. Good-bye then, Jim, for we must go in to Aunt Helen now. Good-bye,—my brother and my friend."

So, notwithstanding Jim's indignant repulsion of the same words when used by Marjory, he went away with this promise upon him, that to his earnest mind had all the strength and holiness of a vow.

He went off, with few more words to any one. He said farewell with sadness to Aunt Helen, telling her it was *not* "to be" as they both wished, but that next day she

would hear something that would make her very glad.

"And you are the only one, remember, Aunt Helen," he added, "who knows my secret, and you must keep it for me for ever."

"I can hear nothing," she had answered him, "that can make me happy now."

"Oh yes, you will," he said. "I must not tell you, but you will be very glad."

"I do not know," she replied, shaking her head. "I understand nothing; but, at all events, my own boy, I see no cause to change my will, or allot my money differently. I have made it again now, and I will let it stay."

He did not realise her drift at that moment; in the midst of the heart-pain that tore him, the words "will" and "money" carried no meaning to his ear.

Aunt Helen had never consulted him on her own matters, and he did not feel impelled to discuss them now. He took farewell of her.

He wrote a note to Godfrey from his

home that night, full of good wishes, and asked him to come and see Margie, and receive from herself her gratitude for that kind deed in London towards Robert Deane. And then Jim was off again, travelling away by himself over the long journey to India, and fighting out alone that battle of confusion between the circumstances and the sentiments of life.

He fought it, he conquered, and, earnest and determined, he turned himself to work again. How he conquered, what arguments he found to bring to bear on his shaken nerves, his principles mocked, his heart tortured, his life swept desolate—it was not till long afterwards that he was able to tell.

CHAPTER X.

"YOU MUST MARRY—MONEY."

LADY MARIAN sat in her drawing-room late in the afternoon. She had returned from her drive; she, and Edith and Helen, had been paying a round of state visits in the neighbourhood, and they were now settled in the drawing-room for the dusky hours before dinner.

Edith bent over her work in the window, catching the last rays of daylight. Helen sat, buried in a novel, in the depths of an arm-chair. Lady Marian wrote letters. The fire blazed up, and clothed the chintz-covered furniture, the handsome ornaments, and large proportions of the room with a glow of comfort and homeliness, and over all there rested an air of quiet decorum

and propriety that Lady Marian's presence never failed to convey.

Suddenly it was broken by the noisy opening of the door, and Goff entered, looking huge, bright, and handsome, fresh from the crisp evening air, still dressed in his rough shooting clothes, still wearing his heavy shooting boots.

He had come with a purpose—and Godfrey's purposes never brooked delay.

"My dear boy!" exclaimed his mother, looking aghast at him. "In the drawing-room in that costume!"

"Oh bother!" he answered. "Never mind, mother; I always go like this to have tea in Helen's room."

"Yes, but my drawing-room, Godfrey. Something is due; really your boots and the state of your general appearance——"

"Oh, hang it! If a fellow once goes upstairs, he doesn't want to come down again. I won't stay a minute, mother; you need not fear."

He came out and stood on the rug, with his back to the blazing logs, and looked

down, somewhat sheepishly, and contemplated the muddy boots.

Lady Marian resumed her writing with a hopeless air. He glanced from one to the other of them,—all occupied; nobody seemed inclined to listen or to look up.

"Mother," he said at last, "if you can stop your important correspondence for a moment, I have something to say to you."

Lady Marian laid down her pen.

"What something to say to me, Godfrey? Anything—" she added nervously —"anything your sisters ought to hear?"

"Oh yes; it won't hurt them. I suppose they will take some sort of interest—at least, Buss will. Where is Bussy, Helen?"

"With Miss Kerr," Helen answered, looking up for an instant, then returning to her book again. Helen took after the placidity of the Clarenleighs, and Godfrey's boisterous ways were a nuisance to her.

"What's the use of sisters, I wonder!" said Goff. "Lessons, lessons, as long as they are good for anything, and then novels, worsted-work, and society rubbish for the

rest of their lives; that's about the whole story."

Helen looked silently disgusted; she never trusted herself to spar with Goff. He struck his foot sullenly against a foot-stool that lay near him, looked out of the window, and felt very much inclined to keep his tidings to himself. Not a sympathetic audience certainly — all apparently absorbed in their own interests and themselves. And I think it is often so. I wonder if quite as many brothers would "go to the bad" if sisters were always unselfishly sympathetic? I think here and there they might save,—one.

"Is that all you came to say, Godfrey?" said his mother at length, resuming her pen.

"No, that is not what I came to say," he answered in a harsh tone. "I have something to tell you, if you care to hear."

She looked up at him quickly. It could not be anything matrimonial, she thought, for he had displeased her by leaving the Adelaide Cathcart business unsettled in

London, and Lady Marian had not penetrated that pink boudoir at the Caledonian Ball.

"I merely want to tell you," he went on —"I think it is right you should know—I am engaged to be married, mother."

"My dear boy!" She rose from her seat and came over to him, and even Helen put down her book.

"You good, dutiful boy—and I was so afraid you would not do it—and you settled it, after all, before you came down?"

"No; I settled it last night," he said.

"What, by letter, you sly boy? Oh, I am so rejoiced—such a fine fortune, Godfrey! You lucky fellow—no need now to sell the out-lying Craig!"

"You're on the wrong track, mother," he said roughly. "She has not, as far as I know, a sou."

"What!" cried Lady Marian, taking her hand from his shoulder, and starting back dismayed.

"Not a sou, that I am aware of. You had better wait till I have finished my

story, mother, and then shape your congratulations accordingly," he added in an ironcial tone. "I am engaged to the sweetest, and best, and dearest little girl I ever knew, the only girl I have ever loved, and who loves me with all the fresh sweetness of her heart. I am sure that ought to give you pleasure, mother," he added earnestly.

"Godfrey, what have you to tell me!" she cried. "Not a sou! not a sou!"

"She is the purest, dearest little thing," he hurried on—"she is as beautiful as a May rose, mother, and,—she loves me. You know now who I mean."

"What? Who?" gasped Lady Marian. "She—that little Irish——"

"Stop, mother!" he shouted, "you have guessed rightly; it is Beatrix O'Neil."

"Impossible!"

She sat down on the nearest chair, and looked up with an appalled expression into his face.

"How often—how often have I told you you must marry *money?*" she said.

"And, oddly enough," he replied curtly, "*I* prefer to marry,—*love.*"

"It is impossible!" repeated his mother. "You cannot think of marrying that little girl—a mere nobody, and penniless! Godfrey, why, in heaven's name, should you throw yourself away?"

He laughed a little bitterly.

"My precious self!" he said. "I am a valuable commodity, certainly, and should be disposed of with consideration!"

"Of course you should; your position, your name, your prospects—everything requires it of you; and to throw yourself away on a little chit of a girl, who has not one single thing to recommend her——"

"Mother, what can you mean?" he cried to her. "She is as good and sweet and darling a child as heaven ever created; she is as good as she is beautiful, and beautiful as she is good. Do you call that nothing to recommend her?"

"But no connection, Godfrey, no money!"

"Confound connection, and confound money!" he exclaimed with sincere warmth.

"Godfrey, Godfrey!" cried his mother, most truly appalled, "remember your sisters' presence, sir, if you have no reverence for mine."

"Beg your pardon, mother; I have no wish to offend you, but these are my sentiments at present."

"Keep them to yourself then, sir. Unfortunate boy, what a folly you have committed! What is to be done?"

"Mother," he exclaimed passionately, "you are altogether on a wrong tack. What's the use of all this row about it?—think of the matter rationally if you can. What am I, mother?—an idle, dissipated useless fellow, going to the devil, as you well know, as hard as I can. Should I not be thankful that heaven has given a little girl, such as *she* is, to love me, and whom I can love? And should not you be thankful that I am ready to cut that whole business of London life and racing and all the rest of it, and that I am willing to settle down here, and try to be respectable? Should you not be just delighted, mother, and be

ready to float me off, all easy, and help me out of my present cursed hole?"

"I cannot help you—I will not help you, to wreck your whole prospects in life. Oh, Godfrey! and I expected so much for you, with your looks and your popularity! Oh, dear! oh dear!"

"Mother, do not be ridiculous. What did you expect me to do?"

"To marry money, Godfrey, and of course, if possible, connection as well, but that I could have done without. I could have reconciled myself to Adelaide Cathcart, I could indeed."

"But then, you see, I could not," said Goff.

"What is to be done?" continued Lady Marian. "Godfrey, it is impossible, you must give her up."

"Give her up? I should think not!"

Trixie's kisses were still lingering on his cheek, and the glance of her eyes still thrilling him. Give her up! no, he did not feel like it then!

"But what can you do?" she continued. "You are laden with debt again."

"Yes, worse luck to it! But I can sell the out-lying property, and put that to rights."

"No, Godfrey!" cried his mother triumphantly; "not an inch of it! By my marriage settlements, you rash boy, you cannot touch a stone of it without my consent."

Godfrey swore deeply again below his breath.

"I advise you to consent then, mother," he said aloud. "It is a matter of my life's history to me. I feel I have got to a turning-point somehow, and I think I could break myself away from the devil at this moment, and go on the square. You had better consent."

"I cannot," she persisted. "You must give her up."

"I will not!" he thundered. "Think better of it, mother, think better of it, before you throw an obstacle in my way. Nothing will make me turn from it now, I tell you, for I love her with all my heart."

And to do him justice, at that precise moment he did.

Trixie had been ten times more attractive to him at the Caledonian Ball than she had been six months before. Then she had appeared to him as a bright lovely child, charming him with her simple ways, winning him by her sunny smile, her radiant and unconscious beauty. Now, she came upon him differently. An era (though he knew it not) had been lived through in her life since he left her.

First, the quickening touch upon her heart's pulse, of love intense and passionate for himself. Then, the fiery suffering in her love,—the heart's solitude, the heart's hunger, the heart's struggle towards a suppression of itself. And above all, the new, deep, and earnest influence that had come into her life, through the friendship and the companionship of a mind like Jim's.

Trixie's eyes had gained reflection, her beauty had acquired a tenderness and depth, and it came fresh again upon Godfrey, with an intensity of influence that awoke a quick throbbing fever of love within him.

His cheeks were hot, his eyes burning,

and his heart beating with the excitement of his love, and he swore again and again to himself, as he stood there, that nothing in earth or heaven should part him from his purpose now.

He turned from the drawing-room, in sulky silence presently, for no one said anything more to him, and he lit his candle and walked up-stairs to his own apartment, feeling sore and disgusted with everybody down-stairs.

"What an idiot a man is!" he thought as he walked along the passage, "to get into money-bothers, and hang chains of debt round his neck, just ruins his independence, that's all it does, and puts him into bondage to guardians and settlements, and beastliness of that kind! How a fellow can be fool enough to make a slave of himself, when he was born a free man! That's what I've done, however! Halloo! what's the row about here?"

And he paused before a door. A ray of light streamed out into the passage from beneath it, and from behind came the

ringing laughing voices of Gussy and Buss.

He opened the door a few inches, and was greeted with a shout of joy.

"Oh, Goff! come and have tea! Do, do. What fun!"

"Haven't time," he said. "Well, Miss Kerr, how goes life with you? Late for dinner, am I not? or I'd stay. May Buss come for a few minutes to my dressing-room?"

"Yes, she has done her lessons," said the governess, always glad to let one of her little birds loose for a fly.

"Come along then," he said, and she rushed before him down the long corridor, and shot through the red door that enclosed his apartments at the end.

Godfrey was hungering for sympathy, and for a willing ear to listen to his confidence, so he pitched upon Buss, recipient of his troubles since her babyhood. They were often of a nature beyond her comprehension, but never beyond the scope of her sympathetic powers.

"Well," he said, putting down his candle, and throwing himself into his arm-chair. "Here's a go now, Bussy."

"What?" she cried, not quite able to read from his countenance whether he brought a tale of joy or woe.

"Buss," he went on, "do you remember the evening last May, when I sent you before dinner to somebody's room, with a bunch of flowers?"

"Quite well!" cried Bussy, her face lighting up, crimson and luminous with expectant interest and mystery.

"Well, you liked her, didn't you?"

"I should think I did! I loved her, Goff."

"So do I," he said solemnly.

"Goff! Goff! I am so glad. And—and—is it——"

And Bussy stopped, and became more crimson, not knowing quite how to put the important query, but with festive visions of bridesmaids' dresses and wedding-cake, floating deliciously before her eyes.

"It is," he said, with much mysterious

solemnity. "It is all settled, Buss, we are going to be married."

"Oh, Goffy—I am so glad! You darling, you dearest."

And Bussy, unable to find more words to convey the climax of her enthusiasm, dissolved into a flood of sympathetic tears, and threw herself upon Goff's shoulder, with her arms tight round his neck.

"Cheer up, little one!" he said, after holding her close to him for a moment, and feeling she did him good. "Don't disfigure your beauty on my account, hold up!" and he restored her to a perpendicular position. "So you will like your sister-in-law, will you? That's all right."

"Oh, Goffy, I'll adore her. She is so lovely, and so dear. I have often longed that she would come back again. Oh, Goffy," looking up with sudden inspiration, "when will you take me to see her?"

"To-morrow, if her ladyship lets you go. Good heavens! Buss, dry your eyes,—how hideous you look! Haven't you got a pocket handkerchief? Don't rub your fists

into them any more. Here you are—mop them up with mine. You're a good little animal, but off with you, I shall be late!"

He kissed her with a huge rough hug, and dropped her from his shoulder, and Bussy departed, made happy by Goff's confidence and by the embrace that had sealed their friendship,—an act of fraternal devotion that he did not perpetrate once in five years, and Buss felt highly honoured.

Presently she came back again, mopping her eyes still with his large pocket handkerchief, and looking truly unbeautified by her demonstration.

"Good gracious! You again?"

"Oh, Goffy, *may* I tell Gusta and Miss Kerr?"

"Of course you may. Off with you—there goes the second gong."

Ten minutes later he was striding along the corridor again, with a hasty step descending to dinner, when out from the duskiness behind the open door of the little girls' bedroom came Buss.

"Goffy," she cried, "I won't keep you

a minute—but stop. Look here, mamma may not let me go to-morrow,—I do not think she will,—it is not a half holiday, and I mayn't see you again. So look here, Goff, this is for—for—*her*, you know. Will you give it with my love?"

"You little ridiculous being! Very well, I will if you like."

And his face softened strangely as he looked down at Buss.

"I'm so glad I caught you," she said.

Then she looked up at him shyly, and the tears came into her eyes again.

"Kiss me again, Goff," she whispered, "because you know I am so very glad for you."

He stooped and kissed her carelessly again, bestowed a pretended box on each ear, and said—

"You absurd little ugly monkey, good night." And then he crammed her parcel into his pocket and hurried on.

As he sat in the smoking-room that evening, he was impelled by curiosity to examine its contents, and he discovered a little dainty

sachet, some one had sent to Buss as a valentine. Two cupids holding a rose-wreath, on the picture outside, and the words, "Token of my love," were inscribed beneath, in fantastic letters of elaborate device.

He laughed heartily to himself, and enveloped the little offering in its tissue paper again.

"Poor little Bussy, she's a brick of a child, and no mistake!" he said.

They had a sulky dinner, and a sulky evening in the drawing-room. Lady Marian was considering her next move. Helen and Edith were considering many things,—not connected with Goff.

And he himself stood cogitating on the rug, for a few minutes, and then departed to smoke.

"Mother," he said, as he left the room, "I presume you will come over with me to-morrow, and call upon my future wife."

Lady Marian winced.

"Not rather premature, you think, Godfrey?"

"Premature! no, why should it be? Everything is settled."

"Is it?" she said.

"Yes," he exclaimed angrily, "and I think you had better send a letter to Colonel O'Neil this evening, mother, accompanying one I am just going to write to him now. Will you?" he stood, candle in hand, pausing at the door for her answer, looking back with some wistfulness, hoping she might soften, and say to him some gentle words, and Lady Marian reflected a moment, and then she answered—

"Yes," she said, speaking slowly, and in a cold, considerate tone; "Yes, I will write to Colonel O'Neil."

No more. Goff banged the door violently behind him, and was gone.

CHAPTER XI.

EMBARRAS DES RICHESSES.

CERTAINLY nobody ever had more cause for perplexity under an *embarras des richesses* than had Colonel O'Neil when, awaking next morning with resolutions to mature his views that day upon Mr. Andrew Forde's proposal, he received, before he completed his toilet, the two following epistles from the Craig. First Godfrey's came to hand :—

"MY DEAR COLONEL O'NEIL,

"Ever since your visit to us here last spring, I have had a piece of intelligence to impart to you, which I fear I have already too long delayed. It is the fact, which I am sure will not surprise you, that on a few days' acquaintance I fell in love

with your daughter. I was made happy by the discovery that my love was returned. She has consented to be my wife, and in acquainting you with the fact of my offer, I at the same time beg for your sanction to our engagement. I know I am a worthless fellow. I have been in all manner of scrapes, have come croppers without end, and cannot conceive how any girl can think of me; but, thank heaven! I have found that she will. If you will let me have her, I will promise everything you could wish in the future. I am sick of that kind of life; I want to be steady; I assure you I do. I think to be laird of The Craig and the husband of Trixie would be enough for any man, and I know it will be enough for me. So, if you will have me for a son-in-law, I'll promise to keep steady and on the square. There will be bothers and hideous rows about debts to be got through, and my lady mother intends to kick up the devil of a row. But you back me up, Colonel; you stick to me like wax; that is all you have got to do, and it will all come right in the end. Say

'the top of the morning' to Trixie from me when you go down to breakfast, and tell her I'll be over to see her early in the afternoon. My dear Colonel,

"Yours very faithfully,

"GODFREY HAMILTON.

"The Craig, October 2nd."

"God bless me!" was all the Colonel could say, as he stood transfixed in his shirt-sleeves, and proceeded to read Lady Marian's letter.

"DEAR COLONEL O'NEIL" (it ran),

"You will know by this time what our foolish boy and girl have been doing, and I am convinced that you will feel with me that it is a case that will require our utmost vigilance and our careful connivance to prevent a catastrophe. I know you will reciprocate my sentiment that your charming girl should do much better than espouse my poor wild boy. I do not conceal from you, at the same time, that I have other

views for him, and that the course would not meet with my consent.

"I think it right further to inform you that without my consent he cannot dispose of any portion of the Craig property, the chief part being, as you are aware, entailed, and the outlying fragments being comprised in my marriage settlement. Thus, without my co-operation (which I shall certainly withhold), it will be impossible for him to clear himself of his debts sufficiently to make him a desirable *parti* for your lovely daughter. The sweet girl may reasonably aspire to a far more brilliant position than he, alas! can offer her.

"Having thus made myself unreservedly understood, I have no doubt that I shall receive your connivance in the matter. Ours is for the moment, however, a difficult part to play. My poor boy is not one who can brook harsh opposition; an open war against his wishes would, I feel, but hasten the calamity we wish to avert. My view is, therefore, that we veil our disapproval for the time being, and that you and I should

discuss together the perplexing prospects of the case. Meanwhile, let us leave them undisturbed. Neither of them would endure our interference; let us withhold it, and let our one point for the moment be to restrict as far as possible all knowledge of the engagement within the circle of ourselves. I will do myself the honour to call, with my son, upon Miss Lindsay and yourself to-day.

"I am, dear Colonel O'Neil,

"Yours very sincerely,

"MARIAN HAMILTON.

"*The Craig, October 2nd.*"

Colonel O'Neil was very nearly, but not quite, a fool. Through his enormous vanity and self-love he could be flattered, cajoled, and bamboozled into any course, but he had just wit enough to recognise the exquisite cruelty of Lady Marian's proposition.

Her wild, troublesome boy was to be kept quiet, and satisfied by the amusement of a transitory engagement with his little girl! He swore angrily to himself as he finished

dressing, and reflected the while on the condescending impertinence of Lady Marian's letter, and he seized his pen to write hurriedly back to her a few indignant lines, asserting, that if she had other views for her son, he had equally other intentions respecting his daughter.

But even as he wrote the date of his letter he paused. The position was many-sided. Andrew Forde had offered for his daughter; he was wealthy, a great *parti*, but then apparently Godfrey had won her love. And Godfrey, though poor,—perhaps, even embarrassed,—was a better marriage in the fixed dignity of his position, as laird of the Craig, than the ship-builder with all his gold. Colonel O'Neil was man of the world enough to know this.

If Trixie has this card in her hand then, why should not she have the chance of playing out her game? He had considerable faith in her power; he had watched lately, with triumphant admiration, how one after another brought within the circle of her influence had succumbed to her beauty and

her child-like charm, and he had great faith in her hold upon the hot impulsive nature of Godfrey Hamilton.

Why not let her have her chance? What, if by playing into Lady Marian's hands for a moment, he might succeed in outwitting her? *He* outwit Lady Marian Hamilton! Deluded Colonel O'Neil!

Meanwhile he had another letter to write. Mr. Forde would be expecting his communication, so the Colonel thoughtfully resumed his pen, and indited both.

To Lady Marian, complete concurrence, just a few lines, deferring the consideration of their movements until her promised visit of the afternoon.

To Mr. Andrew Forde, a carefully-worded request that the decision of the subject he had entered upon might be put off for the next six months. His daughter was very young, he wrote, too young in his opinion to be approached on the subject of her marriage. Six months hence would be early enough to call upon her to consider so important a step in her life. Would Mr.

Forde pause? Thus, thought the Colonel, in self-congratulation as he penned the lines, "I keep both cards in my hand, and can play them out according to circumstances. Meantime, my Lady Marian, it would give me some satisfaction to get the better of you!"

So thinking, he went down-stairs that morning, and walked straight to Trixie as she stood by the fire, and gathered her up into his arms with a mischievous smile.

"Ah, Miss Trix," he said, "what is all this you have been up to?"

She looked at him in surprise, and blushed deeply as she met his eyes.

"Ah, ha!" he cried, holding out Godfrey's letter, "what do you say to such communications as this? What have you been about?"

"Oh, papa, has Goffy written?"

"That he has! and a fine frank manly letter too. Ah, Aunt Helen," he went on, as the old lady entered the room, "what do you say to our little girl?" And he

drew Trixie towards her all blushing and smiling through her glistening tears.

"Master Godfrey Hamilton! He shows his taste—by Jove, he does!" exclaimed the Colonel again.

"Hamilton!—young Craig!" exclaimed Aunt Helen, looking wonderingly from one to the other, and then at the letter which Colonel O'Neil had put into her hand.

Trixie bent her face lower still, and then she hid it entirely in the old lady's bosom, and nestled into the kind arms that had sheltered her so long. And Aunt Helen held her close and smoothed the dark hair, and looked over Trixie's shoulder at the Colonel, as if half suspicious of some one, and then she glanced upwards in a silent prayer for her darling, as she felt her trembling in her arms, like a frightened bird.

"Is this what Jamie meant?" she said at length.

"Jim? Oh, he knew, the sly dog, did he?" said the Colonel.

"He knew something, but he told me nothing," said Aunt Helen. "Trixie, look up, child, let me see your face. Yes,—it is bright and happy. Well, my little one, you have chosen, but I little thought which way your choice would lie. Hamilton of the Craig! Indeed—how strange! how strange!"

Aunt Helen said little more just then. They breakfasted, and she and Trixie had a long morning of confidences together. And as she swept back her darling's hair, and looked into her radiant face, she had to confess to herself that she was proud and happy for *her*, though sorely disappointed for Jim. She kept his secret, however, and the eyes she rested on Trixie spoke nothing but sympathy and tearful joy.

Then, after luncheon, came Goff and Lady Marian. He, all sunshine and merriment, as he leant his arms on the window sill and looked up at Aunt Helen in the morning room, and asked her brightly if he "might steal her plaything away."

Trixie stood by him, and glanced wistfully up at his face, and let her fingers

slide into his, and Aunt Helen looked down on them as they stood below her, so beautiful in their happiness and their youth, and she blessed them both in her deep heart, and thought them fair as two sunlit summer flowers.

Lady Marian paid her visit with grim state, and had a talk with Colonel O'Neil in the garden, and then she went driving back again, obliged to be contented to leave her son behind her, though the last glimpse she had of him he was leaning over Trixie, sticking scarlet hawberries he had plucked in the hedgerow into her dark, glossy hair. Lady Marian frowned to herself as she drove away; but there was nothing for it at present—he must have his way.

"Thank God!" she ejaculated piously, as she sat up in her carriage in solitary state; "Thank God! it is only a shooting leave—only a fortnight, and I'll get him away again."

Get him away! that was all, she felt, that was needed—and Lady Marian knew her son.

Colonel O'Neil easily explained to Miss Helen the many difficulties that made it desirable that the engagement should not be publicly known just then, and Goff acquiesced readily in their conditions, while they let him alone to enjoy his little fiancée's society in his own way.

CHAPTER XII.

"YET ONE SUMMER'S DAY."

THEY had a golden fortnight. Sometimes he came over early, with his fishing-rod or gun, and she would go out with him for a long ramble in the Craig woods. He would pretend to shoot or fish, but in reality spent the long hours in wandering here and there by her side, sitting with her by the boundary burn on a pile of stone, or at the foot of the stile, gazing at her, enjoying her, loving her, and daily and hourly deepening her true, strong love for him.

In the afternoon dusk they would come home together, either to the Craig, where he would beguile her through the passages up to Miss Kerr's premises, to have a romp with Buss and Gussy over school-room tea;

or he would go home with her to Sea Grange, and sit with Aunt Helen in the ruddy firelight, and make her happy by the sight of their young brightness, and light-hearted by the ring of his merry laugh.

In spite of Jim's memory, Miss Helen found a very warm corner in her heart for Goff.

They had day after day together, each bringing long, delicious hours of intercourse. They had endless, happy lovers' talk, full of nonsense often—words coming bubbling up, fresh and sparkling, and rippled out to each other, like a summer waterfall, in joyous repartee.

And words coming gravely sometimes, in converse upon their future, and on the deeper and shadier places in the current of their love.

Trixie was often inclined for the sober reflections, but Goff generally managed to light her up before long into a sunshine of fun.

"A sober view of things," he said, "never was, and never would be, in his

line." It sometimes distressed her, for it all seemed so real and so grave to her.

One day, when the fortnight's leave was nearly over, they were in the garden together, and she had sat down a moment on the terrace, and Goff had, as usual, flung himself at full length by her side. He had thrown his head back upon the grass bank, and was staring up into the autumn sky, whistling softly to himself; and she was looking towards the silver sea-line of the Forth far away.

After a few minutes' silence, Trixie drew a letter from her pocket, and began glancing it over gravely, while Goff whistled by her side.

"What have you there, little one?" he said at last; "you have been as solemn and as silent as a little owl for the last quarter of an hour."

"It is a letter from Jim," replied Trixie. "I got it this morning. Jim is a long way on his road to Assam already. Would you like to read it, Goffy?"

He took the letter from her hand, and

held it indolently before his eyes for a moment, as he lay back on the grass; and then he gave it back to her with a great yawn.

"Oh, Trix, I am an awfully bad hand at reading letters. Jim is all right, is he not?"

"Yes," she said, taking it from him with a tiny shade of disappointment on her face; "Yes, he is all right. He writes such a nice letter, Goff."

"Does he?" and Goff raised himself suddenly on his elbows, leant his chin upon both hands, and looked up into her face with a comical expression of pretended austerity. "Do you know, Trixie, I don't half like this correspondence with Jim. I think I will shut it up, I declare I will."

She laughed merrily.

"Goff, how can you be so silly?"

"Well, I do not know; I am an awfully jealous fellow, Trixie. I shall not like Jim acting general mentor to you when we are married."

"Oh, Goffy, how can you be so ridicu-

lous! Fancy your being jealous of any one!"

And she smiled into his face with sudden tenderness.

"Well, I do not know," he said.

"Why, Jim is my friend."

"Humph, Platonic friendship!" grumbled Goff.

"No; just a regular sort of brother-friend, you know—what Percy and Greville ought to have been to me, if they had read books and had thoughts, you know, instead of being sailors and soldiers."

"Thank you, Miss Trix; you think soldiers have no thoughts, do you?"

She blushed crimson.

"Oh, Goffy, I did not mean that; I only intend to say—do you not understand, dear—one likes some people for what they can do, or what they know, and what they think about and say to you; and others——"

"Because they cannot think, and say nothing to be called sense at all, eh?"

"No," she answered, gazing at him now with eyes full of admiration and love.

"But some people need not do anything, or say anything, or think anything, but just be themselves, Goffy, and still one loves them somehow. I do not know why," she added softly, as she let him take her hand, and press it to his lips, and lay his cheek upon it.

"Little soft, white thing!" he murmured, in answer to her philosophy of love.

"But I like Jim, too," persisted Trixie. "I think you would make me very silly, Goff, if I believed everything you said; and Jim scolds me, and makes me feel sometimes terribly small and absurd."

"Jim is a prig!" exclaimed Goff.

"No, he is not; because he does not lecture, you know, in a dry sort of way when he is saying things, but he comes out with them quickly and vehemently, as if he had really felt it all himself, and had done it, and known it to be true."

"Paragon!" continued Goff, in a tone of disgust.

"No; I do not think he considers himself better than other people, only he has some

strong fixed ideas of things he calls principles, and these, he thinks, ought to rule everybody's life; and I used to like to listen to him, as I have heard him sometimes when he came down suddenly upon Al or Rupert. It was splendid, I think, to see him working up to his point, drawing himself up straight and erect on the rug, with his back to Aunt Helen's fire, and pouring out his strong words, with his eyes flashing, and his lips curling and quivering with excitement. Oh, he is no cold philosopher, Jim; when he speaks, he always reminds me of a soldier who has fought all kinds of battles, and lights up into fire when he recalls the fights and the victories. I can see him now, and hear him at his favourite doctrine, 'circumstances may be adverse, but a man is what he makes himself!'" quoted Trixie, catching an imitated echo of Jim's voice. "That was the text generally of what he had to say."

"And what rubbish!" exclaimed Goff.

"No, not to him, I believe; he builds his life upon it. He has had lots to try him, you know, and I am sure it has helped

him through. Let me see, how used he to put it—does it bore you, Goff?"

"No, preach on," said Godfrey, resting his eyes on her, with an amused and admiring gaze. "Preach on, little one, only let me light a cigar."

"Well, Goff. Jim put it all, all the difficulties of life, I mean, upon the confusion between circumstances and our natures. He says circumstances are nearly always against our having simply what our nature desires, and that our life work is to live in submission to circumstances, according to the laws of a character, built up, not upon natural instinct, but upon principle."

"Circumstances suit me pretty well, just at present, thank you!" said Goff. "Nature and everything else taken into account!"

"Yes, it puzzles me a little, when one is happy, I suppose it is all right then. I do not know, I wish Jim were here, I would ask him about it. Perhaps life goes against some people's wishes more than others," moralised Trixie. "I wonder—I hope Jim is happy, I do indeed; but I fear life must

have felt differently to him, from what it does to you and me, Goffy, or else he would not have such thoughts about it. He says nobody can afford to live according to their own human natures; he says that life demands that every one builds up a new character, each within ourselves, and that we all form our lives by what we have recognised to be our fixed principles."

"Oh, what a deal of ridiculous philosophic nonsense he has put into that pretty little head!" exclaimed Goff; and he sat up close beside her, and threw his arm round her with a merry laugh.

"I am sure I am obeying just *myself*, Goff Hamilton, now," he went on; "and it's all right for you and me, isn't it, Trix?"

She blushed again, and nestled close to him, and let her head drop on his shoulder, as she went on again.

"Yes, dear; and when I think of it in Jim's light, I feel lives must be differently made. I am sure it is right to love you, Goff, and——"

"It has not to be a matter of stern principle, has it, Trixie?"

"Jim says," she went on musingly, "that nothing is continuous in this world, nothing faithful, really, except principle. I always feel there is a great deal in what he says, Goff; I do think I will try and form my life upon his rule."

"Very well," said Godfrey, with mock solemnity, "only remember this, that when I am true, and faithful, and unchanging to you, Miss Trixie, you will know it is the nature of me, and just 'cause it pleases me so to be; and if you are true and unchanging to me, I'll know it is thorough stern principle, and all, as they say, against the grain."

"Oh, Goffy, how can you be so ridiculous!" she repeated; and then she looked up at him with the glistening tenderness his words had been meant to call forth, and she clung to him, and—they had no more philosophy that day.

CHAPTER XIII.

LIGHT O' LOVE.

It was a wonderful love-lit, gold-bathed fortnight, a sweet deep draught of intense happiness; such as comes in a life's tale just now and then, to show us, in one dazzling glance, what life—without its adverse circumstances—might have been.

And then it was over. Goff's recall came, and he left her, with tender regrets and eager promises breathed in half broken words, that at Christmas Trixie would see him back again. And meanwhile he would write to her,—write every day; and she must write to him, and tell him everything, —write long long letters, and tell him many times, again and again, how much she loved him;—and then he was gone.

Lady Marian smiled in silent complacency as she watched his dog-cart bowling down the avenue towards the station, and she returned to the perusal of a letter, just received that morning from Lord Clarenleigh.

Of course she had written to him, and so had Godfrey; and Lord Clarenleigh, in his view, entirely agreed with her.

It was not to be thought of!—out of the question! Of course, the rash boy must be gently dealt with, but, of all things, he must be got out of the scrape.

"Meantime, let him come and see me," wrote the uncle.

Several letters passed between Lord Clarenleigh and Lady Marian, and it was probably in premeditated sequence to these, that one or two things happened, directly Goff arrived in town, that surprised him not a little.

One was an invitation to go down to his uncle's place in Warwickshire, join a houseful of people, have some battue-shooting, and do the Warwick Races; including the

information, that with this object, Lord Clarenleigh had already applied to his Colonel, and obtained an extension of leave.

And secondly, on that one evening he was in town, Goff received such sharp reminders from Beale, Conman, and Co., from Firntop and Hart, and from Mr. Moses Cave,—to all of whom he owed largely, for frequent and convenient supplies of money,—that it became absolutely imperative that he should go down to his uncle, and consult him again on the accumulating embarrassments in his affairs.

"He had a 'heavy thing on' too, for the Warwick Races; so on the whole he thought he had better accept the invitation and go."

"Though, of course," as he soliloquized, "had it not been for those confounded debts, he would have cut his uncle altogether, and directly he got extension of leave, no battues, or races, or houses full of people, would have prevented his taking the first train back to Edinburgh, to spend it with his little Trix. But as it was, he had to

go. Well, never mind! he would write to her."

The house was very full at Clarenleigh. There was half-a-dozen of Goff's brother officers there, just come up from Scotland, and having run down for the races and the battues.

There were men from other regiments, and men of no regiments at all, racing men, shooting men, and drawing-room men.

There was a crowd of ladies, and among them was,—Adelaide Cathcart.

It was a cheerful, merry gathering, a great deal of fun in drawing-room, smoking-room, billiard-room, and croquet lawn, for the weather was still mild, and Goff found a many-coloured combat going on when he arrived.

He went off to his room that evening, however (proof against all invitations to smoking-room or tea), in time to write a long letter before dinner to Trixie. Such a sunny, loving letter it was! How her little warm heart glowed as she read it; a letter full of sparkle and fun, of details of his

journey, of descriptions of the various people in the house, of numberless little anecdotes and sayings, such as he used to rattle out to her, all the bright day long, when he was with her.

"A letter," Trixie said, as she kissed it furtively, "a letter just like himself!"

The second evening, he came in late from shooting, he was tired and lazy, he only wrote her a hurried scrap.

The third evening, he was just thinking about it, when Adelaide Cathcart met him, loitering into the house, and from habit as much as from inclination, he turned with her into the tea-room, and dropped indolently into a seat by her side.

These two evenings had already restored them to something of their old footing, and Godfrey had given up, after a futile effort, the attempt he felt conscience demanded of him, to resign the *more* than friendly style of intercourse they had carried on so long.

Adelaide was a little changed to him, he thought; and in truth, reports travel marvellously, and report had reached her;—

a whisper that Captain Hamilton had found some one else, up in his north country, and that, in the game she had been playing with him, *she* had been bowled out.

Adelaide was not to be trifled with; she had made up her mind to marry Captain Hamilton, and, if feasible, she meant still to carry out her scheme.

He was not the only iron in her fire. She was not one bit in love with him; she could have resigned him, if it seemed expedient, without a pang; and even now she doubted if Lord Harry Palgrave were not more to her taste.

But no doubt Godfrey had always suited her; on the whole she preferred him to any one, and, above all, she did not want to be worsted in her little games; she would have it realised—that she would not be trifled with.

So this evening, when Godfrey, in his old accustomed way, leant towards her on the low sofa, and raised his eyes indolently, and with their usual weight of tender meaning, to hers, she looked straight into his face

with a keen glance—new to him—and said very suddenly—

"Well, Captain Hamilton, and when is it to come off?"

He coloured deeply, in the firelight, and turned his face away from hers.

"What do you mean?" he said.

"Why, you know," she answered.

"Know what?" said Goff. "I only know——" and he hesitated, for one of the quick, significant speeches he had so often made to her had risen naturally to his lips; but he looked into the fire, and said nothing more—for he felt, with a twinge of conscience, that they would be out of place, from him to her, now.

Not more out of place, however, than the expression of his eyes, as he turned them full upon her again, speaking a story of admiration, almost of love, such as he had never been able to make up his mind to put in words.

It must all be over now, and he wished himself well out of it, secretly thinking all this sort of thing a bore. More than a bore,

too, rather bewildering; for he had whispered words of significant meaning to her so often, he had looked into her face so frequently and so long, he had assumed a place by her again and again, almost as if their understanding were a tacitly accepted thing. And now he had to convey the tidings to her that he had *spoken* the words to another, he had only *inferred* to her; that he had kissed the seal of love on other lips in a real engagement, that must annul theirs, that was still imaginary.

It called for one bold plunge to escape from this old accustomed falsehood into the truth. He had never loved Adelaide Cathcart; but it had been the pastime of a whole London season to insinuate that he did.

How change the habit now? It required courage, though he knew instinctively that she, too, had been playing with him, and that her soft glances and ready smile spoke no real love. It had been "the thing" for him to admire her, and it suited her to be admired by him. It would have been, moreover, "the thing to do," as he unwillingly

told himself, to marry Adelaide. Certainly Trixie was a darling; but he was not at all certain, as he met Adelaide's eyes again, that *he* was not—a fool.

Lots of fellows would think so, he knew. Well, he had made his choice, and would abide by it; some other man would have the heiress, but he would have Trixie for his own—God bless her!—and she was worth fifty heiresses. There was no one the least like her among them all! Yes, he had made his choice, so he looked boldly again into Adelaide's face as she asked—

"Is it not true, Captain Hamilton?"

What should he say? With her eyes full upon him, it seemed impossible to confess it; habit was too strong; so—

"True? What?" was all he said.

"Oh, the romantic story, you know, about your lady-love up in the North—your engagement, you know—the whole thing they are talking about."

"Talking about? Confound them! Who is talking?"

"Oh, I fancy Lord Harvard and Captain

Lethbridge tell the tale," she said, laughing. "Fancy your being so hard hit, and going in, I hear, for love *au grand sérieux*, and a rustic life, and all the rest of it."

"Rubbish!" he exclaimed. "Who could have told *you* such a story?"

"Why not me?" said Adelaide, bending forward in the firelight and looking into his face.

Their eyes met again—hers soft and dark and very eager, his full of excited feeling, of his perplexity, and his momentary struggle with himself. He did struggle, just for one moment, against the temptation; then—her eyes were very pleasing to him, so soft and dark, and so near his own—and he yielded.

"Why not to me?" she repeated.

"Because you are the last person I should have imagined could have believed such a thing," he answered her; and then his hand stole out in the dusky firelight, and for one moment his fingers closed fast on hers. She let him hold her hand for an instant.

He looked very handsome as he bent

towards her in the fire-glow, a hot flush on his cheek, a bright glitter in his eyes.

"I think I will marry him!" she whispered to herself. "Harry Palgrave is such a hopeless fool!"

"Is it not true?" she said aloud, and her gaze still softened as it sank into his.

Ah, Godfrey! He would have found courage to face the bristling ramparts of a fortress, to walk to the very cannon's mouth; but with her eyes still upon him, with her hand still touching his, no courage came, no power to speak, in truth, the answer to her words.

"You are the last person who should believe such stories," he said.

And then some one interrupted them, and he rose from the sofa by her side.

"It is all a *canard*," she thought to herself; "he is fair game yet. I think I'll throw over Harry Palgrave, after all. Poor Harry!" and then she went off to dress.

Godfrey disappeared also to his room, and there, on his writing-table, were his letters, and topmost, one from Trixie.

He opened and read it—warm and rich with tender names and little sweet love-words; it made his cheeks crimson, and his heart beat anew. He cursed himself, and his own cowardice and perfidy, and he sat down and wrote her some hurried lines before dressing for dinner—lines full of devotion, in which every word and letter glittered with golden promise, and precious jewels of love. Precious, indeed, to the little heart that read them, and the poor little blue eyes that were dim already with tears of disappointment as they waited for his letters, that came tardily now. From that hour,—when he closed the envelope and dispatched these passionate lines,—so many events came, one upon the other, that day after day slipped by, and most days he forgot to write to her.

To begin with, that very evening, when he went on to his other letters, he found them, one and all, to be duns, and even worse than duns—threats and menaces for many debts long standing, all seized now with a strange, sudden persistency to be paid.

What had come to his creditors, that they all rushed in upon him with this rapacious and apparently combined resolution? Who had incited them against him in this strange and unlooked-for way? Who, indeed?

Perhaps his uncle, who expressed such cold surprise, might have enlightened him if he chose; perhaps his mother, who from the Craig held such close correspondence with Messrs. Bird, her London solicitors, could have told something as well. But they kept prudent silence, and Goff thought a demon had taken possession of all money-lending men,—they closed like bees round him.

He was perplexed sorely, and Adelaide Cathcart was his only confidante and consolation. Not that he told her much of his affairs, or anything about Trixie; but she knew enough and guessed enough, just to touch pleasingly and with soothing power on the aching, gnawing places of worry, perplexity, and hideous money cares.

Oh for the courage to break away from it

all! To take the first train to Edinburgh, to go straight to his lawyer, and to advise on the best way of raising money on his property, and clearing his debts,—to go to Trixie, and gather *her* into his troubles and his confidence, and to shake off Adelaide Cathcart, whose subtle influence was closing round him like a spell.

How could six feet two of such physical energies be so morally weak? But weak he was, unresistingly weak; for life glanced pleasantly along at Clarenleigh despite every care, and Trixie's letters became fewer and further between.

CHAPTER XIV.

"THE WINTER SEEMS SO EARLY
TO HAVE REACHED US ONCE FOR ALL."

It was soon a very sore, sad little drooping heart that waited for these letters.

After Godfrey left Trixie, a very dreary period came falling gradually over her. With his absence she began, for the first time, really to miss Jim. With Goff's absence she found herself solitary again in her rambling walks, lonely again, except when she sat by Aunt Helen's chair; and often she found herself longing, with a sad ache and void, for the passionate, demonstrative affection of one friend, and the quiet and deep companionship of the other.

At first came the earlier letters, that long, delicious one from Clarenleigh written the

evening he arrived; the scrap of the next day, with which she was well contented; then a day shadowed with disappointment as no letter came; then those glowing lines of warm devotion he had penned after his interview with Adelaide by the boudoir fire. Then blank after blank came at the post-hour, and at length long tracks of empty days, when she almost ceased to hope she might find in the post-bag that letter for her.

Her father watched her closely, and felt angry and bitter with the Hamiltons, who were bringing this pale shade over his darling's face, but he felt congratulatory towards himself as he thought in secret what a good card he still held in his hand. He wrote again to Mr. Forde, giving encouragement to his proposal, and asking still further delay, which the great man accorded.

Aunt Helen, too, watched the gathering clouds as Trixie crept morning after morning into the breakfast room, and glanced wistfully towards the letter-bag; Aunt Helen would avert her eyes from her "little one's"

face, that the shadow might not be detected there of anxiety and concern.

When Trixie hung listlessly about her room all the morning, struggling to hide the disappointment that tore her heart, Aunt Helen would appear not to notice it, and merely draw the child to her with increased tenderness, and forbear even the effort to turn her thoughts in another way.

Aunt Helen appeared to notice nothing in Godfrey's conduct, but the wound, for her darling's sake, cut deep and sore.

As the winter days drew on, short and dreary by the borders of the Forth, Aunt Helen drooped beneath the storm that was gathering over them, even more than the girl by her side. She said little, but as week after week passed away, Aunt Helen's spirit failed, she became grave and distrait; she seemed to cease all interest in external things and in people, excepting in Trixie.

She never left her chair, she gazed silently and sadly at her child, creeping quietly about, and,—all of a sudden, with the falling of the last autumn leaves, with the first

sweep of the winter's wind,—Aunt Helen's great old age came breaking over her, like a devastating storm power, and she bent her head tranquilly before it, and turned her face away from life,—to die.

The shock of anxiety and distress for her heart's darling shivered to the foundation of her life's energy, which eighty-eight years of existence had well-nigh wasted away. Aunt Helen, like the grand old rugged towers of her country, sank silently, submissively, before the power of time.

It came very suddenly—just a visible sinking of strength at first, and then she was one morning strangely excited about her will and settlements, and entreated the Colonel to send hastily to town and fetch the lawyer, who had written it for her afresh a good many months before.

A thought struck her, she said, she must have it altered. Nothing was going to happen, she continued, as she had thought it would; all was altered, she must alter her will. Ah! how confused and inexplicable things seemed about her for her loved ones,

in this her last glimpse of life on earth! All was well, she knew, with the strong confidence of her Puritan faith, but she must change her will somewhat, she must change her will; would Colonel O'Neil send quickly for a lawyer?

And Colonel O'Neil had sent. But by the afternoon, when he was there, a quiet drowsiness had crept over Aunt Helen, as she lay in the dusk, holding Trixie's hand, and they would not disturb her.

Then by evening the drowsiness seemed to deepen into unconsciousness, tranquil and reposeful, just the first touch of that sleep from which we wake no more.

The sleep grew deeper, deeper, and yet more still, and—the will was never altered, for Aunt Helen never roused to thought and speech again, but passed away gradually, slowly, further and further away, till they knew she was gone from them entirely—that her spirit had passed over the dim border from which it would never return.

And Trixie?

The snow covered the whole countenance of the world now, round Sea Grange and across the stretch of country towards the Forth. It choked up the windows, and lay heavily along the ways, and within the house was Trixie, a little dreary, solitary thing,—so lonely.

Life had come suddenly upon her, all real, terrible, and appalling, such keen agony of suffering thrilling everywhere.

First had come those weeks when Aunt Helen was there to watch her as Goffy's letters failed, during which her suffering had grown keener and keener, as week after week went on, and the letters almost ceased to come. All her little self became frozen up within her into a dull, stunned sensation of pain. She went wandering about during those weeks with but one thought gnawing at her heart, one feeling tearing her, till in its changeless, unceasing agony, it seemed to waste her very life away.

She went wandering about, saying little to any one, nestling silently by Aunt Helen's knee, laying her head down beneath the

touch of the caressing hand, a little deserted thing, her whole powers sunk into one consciousness, one idea, one range of being.

She observed nothing new about Aunt Helen. She did not notice that the sight of her young suffering life was too much for the frail old life that watched it—that it was sweeping that life away. She felt her own youth was dying in those weeks of disappointment, but she did not see in Aunt Helen that daily change.

Till all suddenly it came upon her, this new terrible blow; in one long day it came, rapidly and silently, and it was all over before she realised the truth.

As Aunt Helen lay dying, she had crept about her, and leant all those long hours on the bed by her side, and tried to say to herself, and to carry home to herself, again and again, the fact that another sorrow—death—bereavement—had come upon her now. "A grief so much greater," she told herself, "that the old pain should be forgotten in it. Surely for all that day she must not

think of Godfrey, if Aunt Helen were going to die."

And then she hated herself, for as she sat there in the quiet dark chamber, and Aunt Helen lay peaceful as one weary and in repose, Trixie rested her eyes on the pale, still features; but her own heart's pain kept gnawing, and the heart's cry was "Godfrey" still.

Godfrey! Godfrey! could she think of him? Aunt Helen was dying, she repeated to herself, and—she could not grieve!

She threw herself by the bed-side, and wept agonies of bitter tears, and hated herself again and again because *he* was there in her weeping, not Aunt Helen, and because the passionate outburst from her heart was for *him*—for the touch of his hand, for the sound of his voice, for the glance of his eyes into her own.

Aunt Helen was dying; she was heart-broken and in grief indeed, but the heart's cry was for him to comfort her. Aunt Helen was going, and the old sweet child-life of mother-love and home-caresses was

passing away with her; but her bitterness was for that bright golden future-life that had opened up so glorious with hope, and that was darkened too, all swept away, wintry and desolate, from his cold neglect.

Why did he not write to her? Why did he not come to her, now she was in sorrow and tears?

Then Aunt Helen was quite gone; and utter loneliness came in the red parlour, where she had sat by the window, or by the fire, in the big old chair, where Trixie's footstool stood, and where she laid her head down now, but no caressing hand came smoothing her hair.

Sad winter days these, with their snowy covering lying over the world without, and the chill presence of death in the house within.

Dreary days! and in the midst of them, all suddenly, a hurried letter from Goff. He had missed her last somehow, so the news of Aunt Helen's death had not reached him, and his letter was not a tender burst of sympathy and loving consolation, but an

angry, bitter complaint against life, against circumstances, against debts and worries and guardians, all of whom, he asserted, were combining to make things wretched for,—himself.

It was not a comforting letter. Goff was terribly out of sorts apparently, and there was scarcely a word of love in it, till quite the end; he seemed beset with hurry and trouble and perplexity, and he wound up by asserting,—apropos of nothing she could understand,—that "life was going to the devil." It was all a horrid nuisance, he said, "he did not know which way to turn, but whatever happened, she must not think hardly of him, but remember that he was always and for ever, hers only, in love."

Whatever happened! What was going to happen? She wearied her little head in speculation, and laid it down again on Aunt Helen's empty chair, and let Godfrey's bewildering letter drop from her hand.

Oh! if he would only come to her in her sorrow and her loneliness, just for one short hour, and gather her into his arms, as he

had so often seemed to like to do. If she could only weep out her grief for Aunt Helen on his shoulder, and hear his ringing voice just once say, "Cheer up, little one!" she thought the hard cold feeling would go from her, and her tears would come gently then.

Colonel O'Neil had not much time to think of her in these days. There were many arrangements to make; and then, as troubles never come alone, he had an intimation about this time that Greville, his soldier son, was following in the humbler sphere of the line, the same course of extravagance that Goff Hamilton had followed in the Guards. True, his debts were hundreds, where thousands had described Goff's; but it was the same thing, filtering down through the grades of fortune, and the hundreds of young O'Neil's borrowings were as terrible to his exchequer as the thousands to the laird of Craig.

Colonel O'Neil had to think of this, amid all the business coming upon him with Aunt Helen's death.

He shook his head over his son's letter, then laid it aside, to be considered, as he said mentally, after the funeral, when all things were known. Greville was his eldest boy, and Sea Grange had been in Miss Helen's disposal. Colonel O'Neil waited with some impatience the funeral day, which would bring with it the opening of the will.

It came—it was over—and some light was thrown on Miss Helen's anxiety to see her lawyer again, on that last sad morning.

She had made such a will some months ago, that it was little wonder that under changed impressions, she should have wished to change it now. She had made a new will since that one she had signed many years ago before John Lindsay in South Castle Street. She had acted on her opinion of the character and the extravagance of Colonel O'Neil and his sons; she had left him a small annuity, and mere legacies to the boys. She had left a sum of money to Trixie, just sufficient, as the old lawyer

reported her words to have been, "just sufficient, when she took up her housekeeping, to feather cosily her nest." And the whole bulk of her fortune, with Sea Grange and all comprised in it, she left to her "dear nephew, James Forbes Lindsay, of the house of Churchward and Conway, Tea Planters, Assam; being of opinion," as the will went on to say, "that she thereby best secured the happiness of both her most beloved children."

The deed was dated a few weeks after Jim's arrival, and the lawyer made no secret from Colonel O'Neil of the impressions and expectations under which it had been made. When things had so far altered, that Trixie became engaged to marry Hamilton of the Craig, Miss Helen, with her strong love for her only Lindsay boy, had not felt it necessary to change her will. Sea Grange had been always the property of the Lindsays, and, even for Trixie's sake, she would not detach it from her own family to merge it in the Craig.

Just before her death, however, it struck

her differently, but just too late. She died, her will unaltered, and Trixie left entirely dependent on the small annuity to Colonel O'Neil. It was very appalling, at least to him; *she* scarcely took in the change.

The Colonel wrote to India, and Miss Helen's lawyer wrote too; but Trixie had not heart or spirit to send one line.

So the letters went out, informing Jim of his sudden succession, containing, of course, no allusion to Goff and Trixie, and leaving him to realise, as best he might, the new state of things at home.

The boys scattered, for Al and Rupert were starting to colonise abroad. The Colonel in town-quarters, living somewhere on his little income, and thankful to be near his Club. Trixie reigning in the mansion at the Craig, and Sea Grange standing empty, deserted by its old familiar inhabitants, and become his own.

When these letters reached Jim, he was in a fair way to do greatly in his Indian business, and he did not feel, as things

stood with him towards Trixie, inclined just yet to go home. He contented himself with writing various letters, little conceiving the real state of matters with those to whom they were addressed.

To Trixie, a warm and earnest expression of sympathy for their loss; tender, sweet words of love and reverence for the memory of Aunt Helen; and bright words besides, of hope and kind wishes for her own welfare in the new home and surroundings which, he thought, would so soon be hers.

To his uncle, a friendly letter of regret that he himself should profit by what would be his uncle's loss; a hope that he would occupy Sea Grange as long as it suited him, and at the same time, the belief that the Colonel would find life more congenial, when Trixie left him, in a town.

Finally, he wrote to his mother, and offered Sea Grange to her and Marjory for their home; and then he went back to work again, often wondering, however, that the

next long tract of weeks and months brought him no answer from Trixie to his letter, no expression of feeling from her side for Aunt Helen, which he knew must be so real and so strong.

CHAPTER XV.

"BLACK WAS THE WAVE, AND WILD THE HEAVENS ABOVE."

TRIXIE wrote nothing, because she seemed to feel nothing, to think nothing, to realise nothing during all these months.

The morning after all things had been so far settled, and these letters dispatched to Jim, came another letter. She saw it on the breakfast table, before her father came down, and she caught it up, and her hot dry eager eyes read the direction, and knew it was Godfrey's handwriting.

She pushed it close to her father as he sat down, and he opened it with a frown. A little folded enclosure dropped from the envelope, and fell, unnoticed by him, on the floor, and Trixie feared to move to pick it

up (though she felt it must be for her); for as her father perused Godfrey's letter, a hot flush covered his forehead, deep curses broke from him, and an expression, dark and angry, came over his countenance, such as she had never seen there before. She sat, chained to her seat, and watched him.

"Papa, what is it?" she said at length, as her father turned the letter over, and proceeded to read it again.

"Scoundrel—blackguard—villain!" came the execrations, pouring from his lips, with fierce oaths interlaced between.

"Papa, papa, what is it?"

He looked up at her, at her pale anxious face, and great eager, hungry eyes.

"My poor darling! I could shoot him, the d——d villain! I swear I will!"

"Papa!" she called, with a little agonized cry, as she held out her hand for the letter, and her lips parted again, but she could not utter a word.

He held it back from her, frantic in his anger, but uncertain what to do. Then he rose from his seat, dashed it down before

her, and walked to the window, and looked out upon the snow with muttered execrations again.

She read it. One little moan broke from her, and before he could turn and detain her, she had fled from the room. Godfrey's letter fluttered to the ground, and she left it there, and fled from it, as from a cruel poisoned thing.

"Scoundrel!" repeated the Colonel to himself; and then he came forward to where she had been sitting, picked up the letter, and perused it with many execrations again.

It was but a lame effusion of Godfrey's; a confused tangled utterance of his own misery and perplexities; bewailing his debts, his difficulties, his extravagant habits, his devotion to Trixie, and his despair at *giving her up.*

"In giving her up!" It was very plainly put. He was heart-broken, he said, he loved only her; but he was beset with money troubles; it was hopeless, he must give her up.

"Of course, before very long, she would be married to some other fellow; he was quite sure of that, and would have forgotten him. He was much to be pitied—it was hard upon him—but he could not help himself; he was sure he wished her every happiness, and—he gave her up."

Oh, the deplorable force of habit! The fatal power of that dazzling, bewildering lie concerning the things of life we need, concerning the cost of life's happiness, concerning the imperative requirement of life's luxuries, of life's position, of life's pomp and pride; and ah, the power of that old inveigling falsehood that enslaves people to act as all their neighbours have acted, and marry and not marry, all in accordance with that law of no appeal, that men call "the thing" to do.

Marry money, marry position—be assured there is no greater error than to dream of love!

"I am a poor beggar," Goff thought, as he wrote that letter. "I envy my own huntsman, for he married last Saturday, and

I believe the fellow married for love. I cannot afford that luxury, and,—he can!"

Young energies and strength, health, income enough to be respectable and happy, only no courage to break away from old habits, no power to resist old associates; the strongest man in the British army, but just too weak to be consistently faithful and true. Thinking himself strong, because full of fierce, passionate impulse, and ignorant that all impulse was but the stream on which self was borne weakly along. Unconscious that he had no soul-self at all within him, no force of energy, no power of individual effort, no resistance to the current of every instinct within his being. No free-will in exercise, no kingship over himself, for he went hurrying on, borne through life's history on the bosom of a stormy flood of passions, tastes, habits—a strong, shifting flood, that heaved backwards and forwards with the winds of circumstances as they bore their daily meet of temptation in his way.

He yielded, yielded, yielded; and yet he could raise a fifty pounds weight in

the barrack courtyard, so he thought himself a strong man.

It was not his fault, he said, when he wrote that letter about Trixie; it was the confounded confusion in the force of circumstances that surrounded him—it was a horrible nuisance, but it had to be done, so he wrote it.

And she? She read it in its letters of fire that morning, and it burnt into her brain as she rushed away, burnt in with a power, strong and proportioned to that power his passionate eyes had had to burn their poisoned joy and delirium into her brain in those days gone by. The words burnt into a heart all thrilling and sensitive from the strong touch, so lately, of his ardent love. The words burnt into a whole spirit, and frame, and soul, and character, that had been bathed and quickened into life by him, and moulded into form by his power.

> "Behold, I dreamed a dream of good,
> And mingled *all* the world with thee."

All!—all!—she had nothing left apart

from him. She sat at her bedroom window, with dry, hard eyes, gazing out upon the snow, and tried to realise it.

She sounded all the echoes of her being, and found them—him, nothing but him, and he "gave her up!" She could not weep one tear, for she had waited to weep soft tears for Aunt Helen when he came to her. She had felt hard in her pain of longing for him, these days since Aunt Helen had gone, but she had known that the first touch of his hand, the first thrill of his voice, the first look into his eyes, would melt her into tears again, as they had done often in their brightest days, through the infinite sweet pain of her love.

And now she could not weep, for he was not coming. He had "given her up!"

Given her up! How the words came reiterating their burden of pain! They came back again and again, throbbing and shooting through her heart; and as they came they seemed to burn up all tenderness within her, scorching up the fountain of her tears, and no tears would come, only hard,

black thoughts, as the words came, re-echoed, "given her up!"

They seemed lighting a hot fire within her, these bitter words—that old fire of fierce, angry temper and passion that Aunt Helen had extinguished through love and tenderness these years ago. The old revolt of the crushed heart, that had turned, fierce and bitter, upon her nursery tyrants, when she was a little solitary, suffering child. It came rising up within her now, the dark, passionate side of her excitable being. The wounded heart lifted up itself in proud anger; against the very love within it. It was a heart breaking, and crying out in soundless pain; but a proud, eager heart, with old proud blood coursing hotly through it, forbidding it to soften or to bend, and denying to her any cool deluge of tears to melt and bathe it, though it was hot and scorching, as the lightning-struck earth, when it pants for the thunder shower.

Colonel O'Neil was frightened, when he met her, some two hours later, coming to him with those cold, hard eyes; he would

rather have had torrents of feminine tears to contend with—rather broken sobs and cries than the hollow voice in which she answered him, and the stone-cold touch of her hand.

She passed him, going into the dining-room, for something had recurred to her that she had come to look for there. It lay unnoticed below the table, the little folded note she had seen fall from Colonel O'Neil's letter, and she picked it up now.

There was her name outside, in the large, bold boyish hand, and the note was loosely folded in his careless way. She held it between her fingers, and looked at it, still with those hard, dry eyes, and she tried to realise again (before the familiar aspect of the little missive) the words she should find within.

A cloud of dark passion came rolling over her face, and settled in a shade on her brow and in an angry glitter in her eyes, as she unfolded it, but the words seemed to swim before her, she could scarcely read them.

She caught, here and there words of passionate endearment, every little tender love-

name he used to call her seemed strung together here in an effort to veil the cruel farewell, and yet it was clear and undoubted.

She was "his own," his "darling," "his only little one,"—but, alas! he bade her good-bye. "He was poor and embarrassed, he gave her up to some one else who would have the power to give her all she deserved. He could not ask her always to love him, but he would have her remember that she had been his first, and would be his only love, and that there was no more hope for him without her now, in anything that devotion and pure, simple happiness could give to life, and yet—good-bye, good-bye!"

She dashed the paper from her half unread, she stamped her foot in her angry agony, as years ago she used to do, in the cruel troubles of her childish days; and then she seized the little note again, tore it in pieces, and flung it scornfully into the flames. The fire blazed up—crackle, crackle went the burning paper, and one instant she watched it——

Then suddenly a low cry broke from her

lips, she threw herself on her knees upon the rug, for she realised that she had burnt it, her last, last letter, almost unread. She plucked the fragments from the flames, but they curled into black, smoking pieces, and floated into the chimney away.

She plucked again one little fragment, and when the flame was blown from it, a tiny morsel remained in her hand. She read it eagerly and hungrily, the one little, last morsel that was left to her of all his passionate utterances, of all his outpourings, one little sentence saved—all scorched and blackened, but clear there still,—she read it, "*my only love.*"

She pressed her lips upon the words, she hid them quickly and eagerly away in the bosom of her dress, and she took them out and looked at them again. Her heart seemed to break at last, as they grew misty before her eyes. She repeated the words to herself over and over. She threw her hands up above her head again, in the old childish impetuous way; then she hid her face, she sank down on the rug, she clasped the scrap

of paper close again to her lips, and she burst at last into an agony of passionate weeping, as the memory of him, in his strength and his tenderness, came breaking over her soul.

CHAPTER XVI.

SO DREARY.

THREE months later, in the cold, early spring days, they left Sea Grange.

Trixie was ill, the Colonel said, and he must give her change; and Sea Grange must be let for Jim's benefit, for Marjory and her mother preferred remaining in town.

Trixie was not physically ill, though her cheek had paled sadly, and her figure had grown very fragile and slight. Nothing physically ailed her, only a great, black curtain had fallen over her life—fallen straight across her path, it seemed to her—and she could see nothing beyond it—nothing to hope for, nothing to desire.

She cared little where they took her. Her father suggested Hastings; she made

no objection; so when the uprooting from the old home was over, and the leaving Sea Grange had made all the past still more a dream, they went to Hastings together, she and her father—he speculating how to manage on their reduced income, she obeying simply and sullenly the commandment that,—bade her live.

She lived on, stunned, cold, hopeless, almost without sensation now towards the present, the future, or the past.

Then Greville came to them, full of trouble, which it was utterly out of their power to assist.

Al was gone to New Zealand; Percy was with his ship, and was writing home already with strong hopes expressed that *his* needy condition had not been overlooked by Aunt Helen in her will.

Ru was preparing for a start for South America, "for the colonies," as every one said, "were the only opening for a lot of boys in these days;" and he came to them also, to the lodging at Hastings, with the eager demand for permission to go straight to

the barracks of the Fusiliers, and break Godfrey Hamilton's head.

Ru was, of all Trixie's brothers, her favourite. He was gentler, had a vein of deeper character than the rest. A little understanding and sympathetic feeling had been mingled in his character with the reckless, noisy elements that, with a general love of fun and dissipation, made up the boy genus O'Neil.

Both he and Greville were full of fiery desires for vengeance, but the Colonel dissuaded Ru from any rash undertaking, on many grounds, for his sister's sake; and as for Greville, he was effectually restrained for the present by his inability to appear anywhere in London while his name was still laden with debt.

So they both stayed on at Hastings for the time being—Rupert affectionate to Trixie, and full of keen compassion that was comforting, though often trying to receive; Greville, miserable, plaintive, and discontented, difficult to do with, difficult to occupy or amuse.

It was terribly hard to be anything just then to the two boys. Trixie could not rouse herself to face this new phalanx in the troubles of life. Want of money seemed of such little consequence, such a tiny, painless sting, amid the fiery agony of her heart; and yet to two of those about her now it seemed everything, the one want, the sovereign desire, the thirst of their hearts, and the whole need of their souls—simply money.

The change of circumstances was nothing, she thought, to her, though unconsciously every one of these hard changes made the one great, cruel sorrow the harder to bear.

She suffered from the money-need as well as the rest, though she did not know it. There were many things that jarred her in the new life, and to her father it was wormwood and gall.

The soft surroundings that had made his tame existence endurable at Sea Grange were all gone. The pretty old china and plate, the good servants, the excellent food that had stamped Miss Helen's house as the

home of an old gentlewoman, had all faded for poor Colonel O'Neil into the fare of a lodging-house, and the attendance of a grimy parlour-maid.

And he hated it all. He moaned and pitied himself, Greville grumbled and railed, and Rupert thanked heaven he would soon be out of it.

If only he could carry Trixie away with him! He was very fond of her, and she sometimes almost roused herself to think that she would have liked to go. But it was impossible. There was scarce money enough to ship Ru himself, and nothing before him in South America but a hand-to-hand fight with the chances of life; he came last in the boy-list, and had to fare upon the scraps that remained.

He was delicate, too, and Trixie, if she had a feeling for anything in these days, felt regret that he had to emigrate; but there was nothing for it; a few weeks lingering, and he must go—"glad," as he used to say, "to be rid of Grevy's grumbling and the Colonel's moans."

CHAPTER XVII.

ANDREW FORDE.

WITHOUT inquiring how he came there, how he knew their whereabouts, what impelled him to come—sufficient to say, that one chill afternoon in March there appeared on the horizon of their dull life the substantial figure of Andrew Forde.

The mighty millionaire, who had the palace in Glasgow, and the castle on the Clyde, what brought him with the March winds to the hotel at Hastings?

Simply,—the force of will.

"He had found it always answer best in business," he assured himself, "to fix a given point, and adhere to it."

He had brought that theory to bear on his choice of a partner for the ship-building

concern, and he most naturally adhered to it in his choice of a partner for life.

"*That face in the Exhibition!*"—he had made up his mind to possess it,—perhaps made a note of it in his pocket-book on the same page with certain pictures that, at the same time, he resolved to buy.

Mr. Andrew Forde's history had been, from a certain point, a monotonous one. He had acquired the art of amassing money, and had persevered in it. He had met with success.

Somewhere behind that point, Mr. Forde had *had* an individuality, sensations, perhaps, —a heart. He had thought he had loved even, and undoubtedly had been loved, in the old farm-house on the Craig lands, where his boyhood and youth had grown.

From that point, however, when ambition of wealth had seized him, he had merged his humanity, stamped upon his heart, got well rid of it, and had lived to acquire and to possess. He had become great in the eyes of many men, and very great in his own.

He was a large-brained, tough-hearted, hard-judging, and most obstinate man. He

had not indulged in an affection, he had not committed a folly, he had not evinced a grain of weakness in his whole nature, within the memory of any fellow-man. He had gone straight and sternly on, much honoured and respected, toward the goal of his choice, and he had reached it. He was a mighty incarnation of the coin of the realm.

He had calmly waited during the six months of Colonel O'Neil's request. Then he had written again, all ignorant of the fiery episode that had been lived through, since last he had written, by the little lady of his choice.

Colonel O'Neil had answered him, and bid him come to Hastings and make his daughter's acquaintance for himself. She was ill, wrote Colonel O'Neil, suffering much in nerves and spirits from her months of grieving for her aunt. Mr. Forde would do wisely, he suggested, not to hurry matters, but to come down and conduct his courtship leisurely on his own account.

The Colonel had not the moral courage to undertake such a mission. It would be a

Godsend for them all, he felt, if it could only be; but his heart sank within him when he thought of approaching Trixie's pale, set face, and hard, suffering eyes, upon such a theme.

It was a cold, grey twilight when at last Mr. Forde saw her again. He had talked with Colonel O'Neil on the Esplanade, and heard that Trixie was at home.

"Should he go in at once, and call upon her—enter the field of his enterprise unhesitatingly for himself? He was ready," and his cold lip curled with an expression, as he addressed the father, that seemed to insinuate the assurance that with the daughter he had not much to fear.

Colonel O'Neil felt nervous. Trixie's look haunted him, hard, reckless, and scornful, as it had been lately flung on every one who came near her, save her brothers and himself. His heart much misgave him, that Mr. Forde's reception would be less encouraging than might be desired. But the millionaire was undaunted.

"Let us go up at once," he said; and they went.

It was cold, grey, and dismal outside. Trixie had not left the house that day. She sat near the fire, her long black dress sweeping heavily on the ground, her head thrown back, her fingers interlaced, her eyes fixed on the dancing flames, her thoughts far away.

Her figure, bathed in the rich fire-glow, looked wonderfully still as they entered. She fancied it was one of the boys, or her father coming in alone, so she did not move or turn her head, and for an instant he paused and looked at her.

She was very beautiful as she sat there in the firelight, a soft, ruby flush warming the cold pallor of her cheek, her eyes shadowed with their long lashes, resting on the fire flames, full of expression strange for one so young; they looked weary and laden, and their gaze seemed far away.

He watched her a moment, she was so very beautiful, with the still dignity of a piece of sculpture,—he felt hushed and arrested in his intended advance.

It was Colonel O'Neil who spoke first coming in behind him.

"Beatrix," he said, using the stately elongation of her name that he thought the occasion demanded, "My friend, Mr Forde."

She heard him at the first word, and turned round surprised; then she rose from her seat, and bowed as Mr. Forde approached her. She gave him her hand, as he seemed to expect it, and then answering something, she scarce knew what, to his address, which she did not hear, she sat down again, and looked carelessly away from him, trying to gather her thoughts, and feeling annoyed at the interruption, the distant and indifferent expression still lingering in her eyes.

He had come to visit her father, she imagined, so she sat up to do her part of hostess, as a silent listener to their talk.

But this did not seem to be the intention. Colonel O'Neil sat down opposite her on the other side of the fire-place, Mr. Forde took a chair near her side. He set his hat down

deliberately and balanced his stick on the top of it, he threw open his thick great coat, and then turned determinately towards her, and looked, with a pointed courteous smile, into her face.

"I am delighted to see Miss O'Neil again," he said, with a little stately bow.

She bent her head slightly, and looked at him, her indifferent gaze meeting his admiring eyes.

"It's a nasty day," said Colonel O'Neil, by way of helping him, but Mr. Forde took no notice.

He was meeting Trixie's gaze calmly and critically, testing the clear blue radiance of her eyes, marking the long sweep of the lashes, the exquisite marble skin, with the soft fire-flush lighting on each cheek. Mr. Forde was bravely meeting her gaze, with its half expressed shade of surprise and dislike, at being thus surveyed. He was meeting it keenly and searchingly, flashing the strength of their two temperaments against each other.

His was a strong will, and a powerful

spirit, he had met few glances in his life-time that he failed to lower beneath his own. He looked up at her now, with a certain assumption of right to scrutinize, and full into his own came a cold scornful flood of light from these two dauntless eyes, flashing back a surprised defiance of his determined gaze. He lowered his eyes, and she turned hers indifferently away.

"I hope you like your residence here," he said presently.

"Yes, we like it pretty well," she said, feeling something must be said; and then her father charitably took up the discourse, and talked vociferously, and gave Mr. Forde time to sit and watch her, as she turned her eyes upon the fire again with that weary look in them, and the dull light of suffering coming over her face.

He quite failed to make her talk to him. It was unnecessary, she thought, her father was there, and why should she speak? And she wanted to think of so many things, and not of all these dreary topics suggested by Mr. Forde. Not a word, beyond a mere

assent to his remarks, could he extract from her.

But she sat there, in the red fire-gleam, before him, and she seemed somehow almost mysterious to him in her beauty, so silent, so still, so unexcitable; while the fire-flames danced over her, in the deepening gloom of the little sitting-room, and wrapped her in mystic fantasies of light and shade.

How often he had drawn his chair to a lady's side in a drawing-room, and how unfailingly he had seen pleased smiles light up the fair face, at the smallest semblance of attention on his part! Had he not been the millionaire, the *parti par excellence* of his own circle for years?

Now, he sat there and glanced up, almost furtively, as the time went on, and he let his gaze rest, when she did not detect him, with a *sensation*,—such a strange thing to him,—a new-born sensation, throbbing, thrilling, somewhere within him, telling him strange things about a "one time," oh, long ago! when he had owned something like a heart. An old dead dry thing it was

now, forgotten,—even if it existed,—its existence unsuspected and unknown.

He sat and watched her,—talking on the while to her father. She scarcely heeded him, and seemed forgetful of his presence; but he stayed on and on, satisfied at last if he wooed her glance for one moment to meet his, content to draw forth the words of careless assent, with which she now and then roused herself to address him.

A strange new thought attacked him too, as he sat there, an idea,—of which a single glimmer had never crossed his brain till now,—a sort of feeling, as he inwardly expressed, that "his money was no good." All these shafts which he had ready, lay useless in their quiver, for all courage seemed ebbing from him to lay hold on one. All the bulwarks of gold he had reared around him, the strong unassailable battlements of self-importance and pride, were slowly crumbling. Something seemed yielding within him, melting under the flash of her eyes, as the icebound coast melts before the summer sun, and the power *went from*

him to throw on her countenance a single one of those cold proud glances, with which he had so long borne down the wills of his fellow-men.

He lost himself in that hour as the millionaire,—he found himself as Andrew Forde the man,—all human. From that hour—with the strange unexpected rapidity with which sometimes, just round a sharp corner, all unforeseen, people meet their fate —existence became changed for him, for ever. From that hour he was no longer a cold, impenetrable composition, like the substance of his specie, but a being of flesh and blood, with a heart, an eye, a sensibility, all waking up—for good or evil—into thrilling life, under the blue lustre of her shadowy eyes and the soft grace of her form, as she sat before him.

He sat and watched her long, and then he rose to go. She gave him her hand again, and the touch of his, as he took it, was changed,—the courteous pressure, half-tenderness, half-patronage, which he had always felt to be due from him the million-

aire towards every member of the fair and aspiring sex, was gone.

He held her hand for an instant, without courage or nerve, and then as she was drawing it from him, he caught it again, in a tight, eager, impetuous clasp, and detained it a second in his own. She looked up at him surprised, his eyes fell once more beneath hers, and he dropped her hand and let her turn away.

He walked out on the Esplanade, and along by the sea, his head erect, his tall portly form drawn to its full height, his precise martial step quickened with a touch of unusual eagerness and uncertainty as he paced along.

There was a faint red spot burning on each cheek, and a light in his cold eyes that spoke a new fire quickened within.

"By George!" he was murmuring to himself, "what an ass I feel! Confound it! What has she done to me! How beautiful she is!" And then his eye melted, and his lip curled into a smile, that was almost bright and sweet as he thought of her.

He came again and again,—for three persevering weeks. He saw her often, as he had first seen her, sitting in the twilight by the fire,—he watched her bending over the tea-table, moving through the room, talking to her brothers, and trying to lighten up into cheerfulness, for their sakes.

He came again and again, and eat their meagre lodging-house dinner, took cups of creamless tea from her hand, and admired her, and loved her, each day more eagerly.

What had come to him after these long years of a hard and successful life? He could not tell. He often arraigned himself during these three weeks and said inwardly, "Andrew Forde, what are you doing? What has happened to you? What has come into your path? *You*, who have laid a giant hand upon every object you have found to desire!—*you*, who have built yourself these palaces and filled them with artistic beauty, and said to your soul, 'Take your comfort and be at ease!'—*you*, who have formed a golden kingdom by your own brain work, and seek nothing but a Queen

to reign in it by your side,—what has come to you, now you have found her? You are shrinking at the last moment as a timid boy, with neither fortune nor kingdom to lay at her feet!"

He could not tell,—he often shook himself together, and strove to regain his nerve, but he had a daunted and courageless feeling, which he could not overcome. For, *love had seized on him*, and all his feeling for her had changed.

He had rested once the critical eye of the connoisseur on her beauty, thinking proudly that her form was even worthy to grace his stately rooms; but now he had lost all power of criticism, and only felt his *loneliness*, and he rested upon her, eyes hungering for one glance of hers in return.

He forgot all those treasures of Hunt and Roskell, all the state and luxury to which he had meant to woo his bride. They had vanished for him, been swept away from the space between him and her. He struck the chords of *himself* at last, and lost sense of his *possessions*; he forgot them, and he

ceased to think of anything,—save the one strong absorbing desire that had seized upon his soul. His wealth and vast possessions were nothing to him at that moment, and it would have been no sweetness to him to feel that they were valued by her.

For a strange feverish wish came to him—a wish that he could stand up before her and see his wealth, his importance, his possessions all ingulfed and forgotten between them—that he could stretch out his arms then and have her come to him and nestle there, and love him, and lay down those steel weapons of indifference, not before his pomp and opulence, but for love's sake—love quickened within her for—himself.

All, he felt in these feverish moments, all might vanish of his life's long success, if she would soften that hard glance on him, and give herself, not to his wealth, but to him.

"Is this the end?" he said often bitterly, as he thought of her cold indifference. "I, who have done so many

things, ruled much in many destinies, and forged, for my own self, the history of my life,—I cannot win a little girl's heart to be tender towards me? Have I set my desire on this single bright thing that I cannot make my own? Patience," he would continue to himself, "you may win her still. Gold, gold, can do much, and they are very needy. She loves her father and her brothers, and they are hungering greedily for your gold." And then a restless, dissatisfied feeling would break over him at this thought, for *this* was not all he desired. "Yes," he would think on to himself with feverish petulance, "Yes, you may yet have the fair casket, and deck it richly to grace your table and your rooms; but the deep hidden thing, the only treasure you really covet, the heart, full of strong, passionate lights, lustrous within the casket, can that be yours? Or is it that to your life laden with success, a career rich in its fruition, this one thing is denied, and such a little thing, such a common thing—the power to win a love?"

It had not been always so in his life's history, for love had come his way in that long ago when he had nought but himself with which to win it. He had tossed it aside forgotten, and now that all things were his—all things, as he had often told himself, "that men need to buy even the *hearts* they desire"—he found he craved something beyond purchase—a something that he wished not his wealth to win him if it could. Her love for himself,—not for his possessions; her heart, in answer to the new strong life in his.

So it was that he scarce knew how to approach her, for he had not thought of himself in that offer he meant to make her. He had come forward conscious, not of his heart, but of his gold. And now—strange and mysterious as it seemed to him—he wished his gold actually forgotten, and had that great craving within him that she would take his love.

Such an altered man—for the time being—had the strange mocking little love-god made even of Andrew Forde. For the time being.

He was proud and strong-tempered as she was—as she was to him, at least, for how different she had become already from the love-warmed "little one" of Aunt Helen and Goff! Her cold scorn often angered him, and made him hotly indignant with himself; but then he would go back and see her again, and the power would come over him of her beauty, and he would yield again to the strong yearning that she should be his wife. If he once won her, he told himself, he would break down the hardness of her disregard. He would not believe that his will and power could fail to be strong enough (if he once possessed her) to bend her spirit, and to turn her heart to his. He had done so many things, surely he would succeed in this. So he told himself to be satisfied to win *her* now,—just to belong to him,—and let him trust the future to win her love.

And so he persevered, seeking strength day by day within himself to address her, but he did not find it.

At last he spoke to her father again.

"I cannot get Miss O'Neil to appreciate my intentions," he said.

"You have never said anything special to her as yet, have you?" said the Colonel.

"No. I should be glad if you would prepare the way. Her spirits, as you mentioned to me, are so unfortunately depressed that I have felt a delicacy in obtruding myself upon her attention. Will you kindly just name to her the purpose with which I am here?"

"Very well," said the Colonel, hesitatingly, much wishing that Mr. Forde would undertake his mission for himself.

"Yes; pray do so this evening, if possible, and then if you will acquaint me with Miss O'Neil's views and the state of her feelings, I will call upon her to-morrow morning."

"Very well," said the Colonel, his tones still so unwilling that Mr. Forde turned his keen, searching eyes suddenly upon him. He had no awe of Colonel O'Neil.

"Have *you* changed your sentiments of connivance in any way?" he asked.

"No, no," exclaimed the Colonel, "certainly not, by no means—only—but—"

He seemed uncertain what he wished to say, and Mr. Forde turned full upon him before he spoke again.

The rich man perfectly appreciated the character with which he had to deal. Men of all calibre were an easy field to him; the management of the Colonel was no difficulty. Would he could analyze Trixie's character as well!

He entered afresh into the whole subject with Colonel O'Neil. A long conversation took place between them, and when at last Trixie's father walked home along the Terrace, an expression of resolve had come over his features, and he had nerved his courage for the part he had to play.

"Beatrix," he began, in the evening, "I have something to say to you."

She turned her eyes, in answer, upon his face, and he averted his quickly, with a nervous twitching of the eyelids as he spoke.

"I am sure it can be nothing new to you

(what I have to say, I mean)—you must have observed it yourself."

"What, papa?"

"Why, Trixie," he replied impatiently, "you do not mean to try to convince me that you do not know what brings Andrew Forde here?"

"Mr. Forde? Papa, what are you talking about?"

"Why, you know. You know what I have to say before it is said, Trixie, but you will not notice him. You persist in discouraging him, so he had to speak again to me to-day."

She sat straight upright before her father now, with her eyes wide and astonished fixed upon his face.

"Papa," she said quietly, "will you please say what you want to say to me, for I do not understand you."

"You are so blind!" he exclaimed, "so absorbed, Trixie, in your own thoughts,—it is really very trying. And the poor man has been struggling to make you take in what he wants for the last three

weeks. What can you imagine brings him here?"

"Why, I thought he was your friend. I was so glad you had some one here who you cared to have coming to the house, papa."

"Absurd!" he replied. "How can you be so blind, Trixie? Surely you see that the man is in love with you—that he has been trying all these days to make you take in the idea that he wants you to be his wife!"

"I, papa, I? He said this to you?"

"He did, indeed; and in a most kind, handsome, liberal way he puts it too. It is many a girl would be devoutly thankful, I can tell you, for the chance; and he really loves you with all his heart."

"And did you tell him, papa, that I have not a single scrap of love, not a grain of heart, left in me to give any one? Did you tell him? It was good of you to prevent his coming to me."

"I did not tell him anything of the sort," he answered. "I knew I should

have all this sort of thing to contend with; but, Trixie, I must try to bring you to reason. You must *not* throw away such a chance!"

"Papa!" she exclaimed, turning on him again, "what can you mean?"

"I wish you would not be so absurd!" he went on in a fractious, worried tone, as if her obtuseness were a personal grievance to him. "How can I put the matter plainer? Forde wants to marry you, Trixie; I am sure you could not wish for a better match, or find a more excellent man. I am delighted at the prospect, and such a thing for your brothers, too."

"Stop—stop!" she cried to him, with a ring of such bitter agony in her tone that in spite of himself he was arrested. "Stop—do not say such cruel words to me. How can you!—how can you!"

And she threw herself back in her chair, and clasped her hands with passionate energy over her face.

"This is nonsense, you know, Trixie," he continued, though rather feebly now.

What do you expect? What do you propose to do?"

"Papa, do not go on!" she cried to him.

"Well, well!" he uttered, with despairing exasperation, "as you will; but it is a miserable look-out for us all. It is not a pleasant kind of thing at home, you know: you, in a state of interesting misery; Greville, with his cursed extravagance at the end of everything; and I, not knowing where to turn. It is a wretched state of matters," he grumbled on; "but if you have made up your mind it is to be so, it cannot be helped. I and your brothers are the sufferers; but, of course, in your present state of feeling, that is a small thing to you."

"Papa, how can you!" she moaned. "Have you no pity for me at all?"

"You know I am sorry for you, Trixie," he said; "but I confess I would like to see you showing a little more spirit, and I always thought you had some affection for us."

"Oh, you know," she exclaimed, "I

would do anything for the boys and you, but not this! Papa, I cannot."

"Well, well!" he answered, and no more was said.

She rose and left the room presently, and then on her knees, by her own bedside, she broke into an agony of strong tears, as all the sweet and bitter past came over her, and the tangled labyrinth of her life, stretched darkly before her now, and repulsion and vehement refusal of the fate offered to her, came surging to her lips.

"No—no—no!" she repeated to herself. "Oh, Godfrey, Godfrey! why did you leave me? Oh, Aunt Helen! oh, Jim! All gone—gone! No one to care, no one to understand and pity me; no one to help me to be strong against this wicked thing they would make me do!"

She had to go back into the sitting-room and make their tea soon; and there were Greville and Rupert come in again, and evidently apprised of what had taken place.

She sat down among them, with her pale tear-stained countenance, and heavy-laden

eyes; and Greville looked up at her furtively, with a sullen discontented glance, and Rupert came over to her as she sank into the big chair. He wound his arms round her, and looked into her face with his great blue eyes, so like her own; and she patted his delicate cheek, and rested her gaze sadly and wistfully on his girlishly pretty face.

Colonel O'Neil was full of the subject, and he could not let it alone.

When he finished moaning at the skim milk, and the general unsatisfactoriness of his tea, he turned round towards the fire beside her, and stuck his heels up on the polished hobs.

"Well," he begun, smoothing his long moustache nervously as he spoke, "I hope you will give that matter your serious thought, Trixie. To-morrow morning, I must send my answer to Forde."

"There is only one answer to make," she replied, her voice full of pain again.

"Well, it is a hard case," said the Colonel petulantly, "a deuced hard case. Really, you girls, with your rubbish of romance and

foolery, make it an uncommon difficult business for us to get you through life at all."

She made no reply.

"It falls confoundedly hard on me to make a home for you, you know. And there are your brothers—it is a terrible disappointment to them, the whole thing."

"Disappointment," she said, "to the boys?"

She was still stroking Ru's cheek, and looking with sad sweetness at him, as she thought that this last bit of her heart's love must also go.

"Yes," growled Greville; "Forde said he would buy my step for me, and pay me all up, if it went square. That's all up a tree now, at all events."

"And he said he would give me a seat in the shipping-office," whispered Ru; "and that I need not go to South America after all."

She clasped his fingers tight in hers as he spoke, and a quick eager look passed over her face. It was an expression full of pain, and she looked almost scared in her bewilder-

ment; but she turned her eyes longingly upon Rupert again, and a little gasping sigh escaped her.

"Ru, Ru, the last of my boys!" she said.

"I do not want to go," he whispered again to her.

She answered nothing, but she shut her eyes, and threw her head back with a weary gesture, as if the thought were too much for her, as if she would struggle from it and escape.

Ru rose from her side, and as she did not open her eyes again, they relapsed into gloomy silence. No more just then was said.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AINSI SOIT-IL.

WHAT *did* it matter—what *did* it matter?

The thought was growing within her daily, as troubles thickened closer, and Mr. Forde still pressed his suit.

If the dead loveless thing she felt herself to be was of any value to him, if the giving away of her heartless, hopeless, cheerless being could win comfort for her father, release for Greville, ransom for Ru, what did it matter to her?—what difference could it make in her pulseless life?

If he cared to possess the thing she was, all hard and unfeeling, as she knew herself, poisoned into bitter passions, all frozen into utter unsympathetic disregard; if he wished, as she told herself, just to buy her beauty,

to fill a vacant niche in his establishment, as he would buy a statue for an alcove, a picture for a blank on his walls—well, what did it matter? Would it alter anything in this dead life to her?

The thought came, growing, growing, gathering round her like the meshes of a net, falling over her with the subtlety of a spell. She was so stunned in every sensibility of her being, that it seemed all of little consequence. She only knew that she felt almost nothing on the subject, save utter indifference to her fate. If they wished it—well, she did not care.

So, one evening, as she looked into Ru's delicate face, and heard her father's groanings, and Greville's surly growl, she threw herself back with a great sigh of utter weariness, and she said to them, "Well, father, so be it. Let him come."

The struggle was over,—it had been too strong for her. The influence and coercion thickening, closing round her on every side. Too strong for her,—the struggle was over, —she had given in.

And on the morrow he came to her, with two red spots of intense excitement burning on his cold face, with eyes full of hungry love for her, his strong frame trembling violently, his conventional voice broken with agitation, refusing to tone itself to dignity and calm.

So he came to her, and she received him, —sitting by the fireside, where he had first again beheld her. She sat in the large arm-chair, her heavy black skirts sweeping the ground, her head very erect, and her face set sternly and very pale.

She turned her eyes upon him as he came up to her, and their expression as they met his was passionless, hard, and proud. They chilled him with their clear cold beauty, and he sat down near her, and drooped his head, waiting for her to speak.

She had passed a long night of bitter agitation, and she had fought through to this intense and unnatural calm. She had nerved herself to the resolution she felt destiny required of her, and she had brought herself to a certain point beyond which she could

not go. She had cast herself into the tide that carried her, telling herself that she simply ceased resistance, but that all unmoved, unchanged, unfeeling, she would float with the stream. Cold, sensationless, without one pulse of love, she would give herself away, yield to the demand upon her, and resign *herself*, if—it were possible that he could so desire.

But she resolved just one thing: that he should know what he undertook. She resolved to speak with him, to be able to assure herself in all years to come that she had not misled him as to the state of things. So far she would be loyal to herself and to him.

"My father has spoken to me," she said at length.

"Ah!" he began, in a hurried, agitated tone. "He has expressed to you the hope —the devotion——"

"Stop, Mr. Forde," she said, "hear *me* first. My father has told me what you wish."

"What is my heart's one strong desire," he exclaimed.

She shook her head impatiently.

"You wish me to—marry you," she continued.

"Miss O'Neil," he bent towards her, and his voice became eager again, "it is the one dream and desire of my soul," he said; "it has become to me the only object I feel precious in life—to win your love."

"Hush!" she cried in a voice of pain. "Do not talk of love to me. Hear me, Mr. Forde—I have no love in me. I have no heart—no feeling at all, nothing but a stunned, dead, heavy thing within me, where my heart once used to be. I cannot love. I have not one spark of love left living within me. I do not love you. I can never love you. I tell you so plainly, without any disguise; and knowing it,—looking forward into the length of years,—is it possible, Mr. Forde, you can you wish to marry me?"

He looked up at her, fired as she was at the moment with the vehemence of her last words, and her rich shadowy beauty bewildered him again. He felt the hunger of

love within him. He felt—"Yes, he would marry her *still.*"

"I do not love you," she repeated. "I can never love you. I am hot-tempered, strong passioned, and I have a bitter, scorched life in me, that I feel often may drive me I scarce know where. It is poisoned love, Mr. Forde—it may turn easily to hate. I feel it sometimes through all my dull, stunning pain. I feel latent fires of evil passion, that might kindle into flame. Has my father told you that my heart has been broken? Has he told you the story of my life? Do you know the cruel thing that happened to me, that aged me from a thoughtless child into a bitter, dark-souled woman in a day?"

"He mentioned to me," said Mr. Forde slowly, "that you are grieving for your aunt."

A look of scorn swept over her features.

"I knew!" she exclaimed. "You have been deceived; but I will tell you the truth, Mr. Forde. I have loved, and I have been deserted, and left broken-hearted

—all my love gone out from me—nothing, nothing, come to me in life instead. And I tell it you, that you may know, that it is the strong, terrible love I have had for another that makes it utterly hopeless that I should feel one spark of love for you. Can you wish to marry me *now?*"

Every drop of blood, every shade of colour, had fled from his face as she spoke to him, and as he rose now slowly to his feet he shook violently, and could scarcely stand; but he drew near to her, and his voice was steady, though very low.

"Miss O'Neil," he said, "I still wish to marry you, and in spite of what you say, my efforts will be still to win your love."

She shook her head again with a petulant gesture.

"Nay," he said, "I will be patient with you. I, too, have temper, and a disposition strong and resistful; but it will be my hope, before Heaven, to make you happy, and if I fail, it will not be from the failure of every effort in my power."

"You *will* fail," she said; and she looked up at him.

An expression of determination came over his strong, stern face.

"I have never failed," he answered hotly; and then he looked down upon her bewildering beauty again.

"I have told you everything," she added. "I have no more to say."

"And I, in answer," he continued, "ask you now, with my own lips, at length—I ask you to be my wife?"

"If you will," she said sadly—"if you will."

Then she turned away from him, and looked into the fire again, with eyes of hard, reckless pain.

"I will!" he cried eagerly, "I will!" and he came close to her, and caught her hand in his at last, and would have bent over her, and pressed his trembling lips to her forehead, but she shrank from him. She drew her hand back, and she turned petulantly away. He stood upright again, and looked at her. Passionate, beautiful, untameable thing—

hard and indifferent to him, and yet his heart yearned over her in love.

"So be it then," he said slowly. "It is settled."

And then he paused a moment; but she did not look at him again, and she had nothing more to say.

"So be it!" he repeated; and then he took his hat, and turned sadly from her, and went from the room.

His heart beat, when he had reached the Esplanade, wildly, strangely, with pleasure and pain. His cheek crimsoned again, and his eyes flashed; but a bitter thought rose somewhere within him, and a curious memory came.

It was of long ago—of two tender eyes, of two soft young arms pressed close round his neck, of a simple eager affection that had been yielded, on one other day, so readily to his. And he muttered low to himself as he walked hurriedly along, as he surveyed his efforts, as he realised this strange new success, as the face haunted him he had just been gazing on, cold, scornful,

and hard, and as the old memory again and again returned, he muttered darkly—

"For the second time in all your history, Andrew Forde, I think you have been,—a fool!"

CHAPTER XIX.

"NEVER AGAIN, LOVE—NEVER AGAIN."

FAR away, in the midst of his life of toil and dull monotony, Jim was spending those months, in some bitterness of feeling against those at home, especially Trixie.

For Trixie had left Edinburgh without telling Marjory the tale of Godfrey and his broken faith. She had sunk into apathy at that time, and could not bring herself to speak of him, and the Colonel was too prudent to allude hastily to any change in their affairs.

So the news had not reached Jim through his letters from South Castle Street, and in his ceaseless thoughts of Trixie he imagined her so happy and occupied, that she had no time to remember him. He felt it cruelly.

He wrote to Marjory, asking when the marriage was to take place, and at length, just about the date of that spring afternoon when Trixie was sealing her fate at Hastings, Jim could resist no longer, he wrote once more to her.

"Is happiness, then, so forgetful," he wrote, "that you cannot spare one short half hour to me? Why do you not write to me, Trixie? or make Godfrey write? I miss your letters sadly, and can only console myself by conjuring up a bright picture of you all at home. You, my two friends, happy in each other, and in that, what seems to me, ideal happiness of a British home life. Out here, as I compare contrasts, I can conceive nothing more perfect, that the gift of destiny to both of you—a home in Scotland, with the power to live in it, and,—together. I suppose it is 'the right thing' at present that you should be utterly oblivious of absent friends; but *when* you descend from the clouds again, will you two write to me, and meanwhile believe me,

how often my thoughts are with you, and how sincerely I desire the happiness of both.

"Faithfully yours,

"JAMES LINDSAY.

"P.S.—I scarcely know whether to address this to Miss O'Neil, or to Mrs. Godfrey Hamilton; but, in case of accidents, I adhere to the former, and more familiar, name—no doubt for the last time."

How slow these eastern posts seem when compared with the rapidity of the changes in life!

Marjory and her mother were old-world people, or probably this letter of Jim's had hardly left the Indies, when a telegram would have carried a strange, most astounding message of home changes to him.

But it never occurred to them to telegraph; they simply wrote.

And one hot night, when the mails came in, two letters reached him as he lay, fagged with work, on the matting in his balcony.

One from Marjory; and another, which he caught up with a thrill of eagerness as he saw the writing of the address.

He tore it open, and read it—there, under the deep blue eastern sky, with its glory of starlight streaming down on him.

And as he read great pain-drops came breaking out upon his brow, a cloud of anger swept darkly over his face, and he clenched his teeth fiercely together, with a passionate exclamation of dismay. He hurried on eagerly to the end, his eyes fixing themselves on the two last words with a bewildered and incredulous expression.

And then his whole face changed suddenly, and a look of strong, tender sorrow came over it, he crushed the letter with a gesture of eager protest, his head sank on his arm, he turned his face away, and covered his eyes with his hand.

"My poor darling, my own poor little one—O God! O God!" And then he turned to the letter again.

"Jim," it ran, without any commence-

ment, "I have received your letter. It reached me this morning, and I have come up here to answer it. It was wrong of me not to have written to you before; but I could not do it. Now,—let me tell you everything. I am sitting at my bedroom window; I am looking out upon the sea. I—we, I mean —come here to-day. Your letter was given to me as I got into the railway carriage. To-morrow we cross the Channel, and go on to Paris; for you are right—your letter came just in time. I am starting on my wedding tour. But—oh! Jim, Jim, I am trying to write quietly, and to tell you about it, for sometimes I do feel quite hard and quiet, and I thought I should be able to write it all down for you; but, I cannot—I cannot! Oh, your letter! your terrible, cruel letter! How can I answer it? It is not your fault. Do not think I blame you. Of course, you could not know.

"Let me think. What did I wish to say to you?

"Jim, why were we made like this? Why *can* we love? Why was love given

to us, to poison and torture our lives; and why were hearts given to us, to be crushed and broken? I am glad I told Marjory to write to you everything; for, after all, I find *I* cannot write it down. I hear *him* coming—my husband—and, Jim, a horrid feeling comes over me, and I hate him—and it comforts me to hate him. It is a positive relief.

"It is not my fault. Why was I made like this? What does it all mean? What does love mean? Is there a God who sees us—is *He* cruel? Does He hate me that He has made my life like this? Why did He let me love? Why did He put love in me, and then this bitter, horrid thing, this fierce, dark hate?—for I feel full of hatred.

"Oh, I scarcely know what I am writing to you. I wish you had been here,—*you would not have let me do it.* But, indeed, indeed, I could not help it. Margie will tell you about papa, and Greville and Ru, and about—I cannot write it, I cannot! What shall I do—what shall I do? Life is all blackness and misery, and it is done—it is done!

"Write to me, Jim; tell me I was not wicked to do it; tell me you are sorry for me. I could not help it, and I cannot help myself now—I love, ah, you know whom! I did not make my love; I cannot change my love. I love, I hate, and oh, I cannot, cannot, cannot hate what I do love, and love what my heart hates. Oh, what shall I do? We did not make our own love, did we, Jim? We cannot help our love, we cannot alter, we cannot force our love; and yet it is all so terrible, and so wicked, nothing but misery and sin.

"I can do nothing that seems right to do. I can kill love, I can hate even him sometimes, even Godfrey, I mean; and then, I hate every one with him, for then all my love is dead. But when it lives again, when at times it surges up, strong, burning, and alive, it is for *him, him, him!* my darling, my own one, Godfrey, Godfrey! Oh, what am I writing? can you understand? Margie will tell you everything.

"Good-bye! I know you are sorry; yes,

yes, you are good, and kind, and pitiful—I know, I know. Good-bye!

"I am, yours—look at my name; read it, Jim; and then think of the letter I got from you to-day—

"BEATRIX FORDE."

"My darling, my poor, poor darling!" came the broken sentences from the agony in Jim's pitying heart.

"What have they done to her—what has happened? Good God, what a letter? what can it mean? Poor, little, broken-hearted thing—married, married!" he repeated to himself, "and not to Goff! Beatrix Forde!" he reiterated to himself in perplexity and dismay. "What, in heaven's name, is the explanation of all this?"

Then he remembered Marjory's letter, and he opened it eagerly.

It explained everything; the faithlessness of Godfrey, the pressure of troubles at home, Greville's extravagance, Rupert's delicacy, the Colonel's persuasion, and the proposal of Mr. Forde.

Margie wrote truthfully her sorrowful tale, writing tenderly of all; defending Trixie (if defence was felt to be needed), speaking hopefully of the reconciling powers of time; bitterly, only of Godfrey, to whom she alluded in scornful words.

She explained it all, and Jim felt it was terrible. He rose hastily from his couch on the matting, where he had lain resting in the evening air.

He came into his room, sat down at his writing-table, and took his pen into his hand. Then he paused a moment; he covered his eyes again from the light, as he bent forward and strove to crush back the turmoil of feeling that threatened to overwhelm him, as he thought of her sufferings, and of his own strong, undying love.

It seemed hard and bitter to him, this entanglement of human hearts, but he forgot himself quickly in the thought of her—that impetuous, passionate nature; that excitable heart, whose feverish throbbing he had read so often in the changeful lights and shadows of her dark eyes; the capacity for suffering,

so evident in the passionate intensity of her love. What must it all be for her now, with that hot temperament irritated and opposed; the feverish life warped and shadowed?

His poor darling! his heart bled for her, and he was so far away. A great longing came over him, that he could go to her, that he might stay near her, watch her, protect her, be her friend, as he had promised, for ever, for life.

He drew his paper towards him, and began to write. First, tender, pitying words, full of love and sorrow, full of sympathy and vain regret, just an echo answering her despair; sorrowing for her, and sorrowing with her, pouring out his pity and his love.

He seemed unable to say enough to her, words failed him—for his love, his sorrow, seemed too heavy, too strong, for words, and he left the letter unfinished, and rose from the table.

He was restless; he went out through the window into the little garden round his

bungalow. He paced up and down in the soft, deep darkness of the Indian night, and the fever in his pain passed away.

It was always so with him. A strong nature, ever working up under sudden excitement into a fire of quick feelings, as quickly and as strongly controlled. For there *was* a stormy under-current streaming, deep and ceaseless, through his heart, but his character floated over it,—not carried away.

Principle guided impulse, and resolution never ceased its control. He was king of himself, though none but he (and perhaps also Margie) knew how hard a kingdom was that *self* to rule.

Impulse, in ceaseless revolution, rushing hastily; principle curbing it with strong, relentless rein. Impulse had written that letter to Trixie, impulse had poured out those passionate, pitying words, and principle came now to scrutinize them, and condemned.

What was all this to her? A weak, wailing outburst of sorrow, to meet her

own. What would it be to her, when she received it, but food for the pain and resentment within herself? How could all this help her? What friendship lay in such lines as these?

It was comfort to himself to write them; it was even soothing to the selfishness of his natural heart to feel her one with him, at length, in pain. She felt far nearer to him, in her suffering, than when he thought her happy with Goff; and there was a deep, dangerous sweetness in the irresistible truth, that his love and his constancy would be precious to her now.

It was strong comfort to him, after his months of solitude, to write to her in sympathy and love,—strong comfort! But was it good to write thus, good in the abstract, or good for her?

He was her pledged, promised friend; as such, how in faithfulness should he write to her?

He read her letter again. Strange, how near she came to him in those utterances of her grief! How familiar each expression

seemed to him, each ring of the broken, aching heart! For had he not known it all, had he not gone through it, lived through it, and—lived it down?

Ah! she seemed very near to him in her sorrow; his heart beat close against hers at length; her heart rang tuneful to his own!

He re-read Margie's letter, and thought over the circumstances. Then he read Trixie's letter again, and one of her last sentences was the first he answered: "*Tell me I was not wicked to do it.*"

"I will not conceal from you," he wrote, "that I think you have taken a false step in life. As I read over your letter, I realise slowly what a telling period in your history you have passed through. I strive to realise you in your new position, and to write to you, in that position, the letter of a friend.

"As I look back on these months, and think of what you have been suffering, my heart is stirred strongly with sorrow for you, and words force themselves to my pen

which I forbear to write, for you asked me to be your *friend.*

"As such, when I now write to you, I crush back *for* you, and I hope *with* you, every vain, weak cry of retrospection that would struggle to be heard. You have come to one of those points in life not unfrequent to some of us, when bygones must die, when life, with all its strong powers of effort, must be seized upon and forced into the right way; when a past must be broken with, and a future lived through self-devotion and resolve.

"To one of the moments, when we touch, perhaps, for the first time, the deep meaning of the commandment, 'Give me thy heart;' when to our hearts comes the message, 'Give me the love that is within thee; give it as I direct thee; give it as the life I have ordained for thee requires,' and our hearts' answer comes in rebellion, 'I will *slay* it first.'

"You say, 'Love is dead in you, or lives only to love wrongly, or to be poisoned into hate.'

"This need not be; for it is false that

love must enslave us; it is false that love cannot be directed and controlled.

"I hear you say, 'What can I know of these things? What right have I, who have trodden over life in such beaten tracks, a level, unbeauteous way, unadorned by the flowers, and unhurt by the thorns of love—how can I,' you say, 'know its tortures, its sweetness, its endurance, or its power?'

"Shall I lift the veil a few inches for you that is hanging over my life? Shall I let you glance at one page of my history, one day in the past, just to establish my right to speak to you, my prerogative to apply what you call 'philosophy,' what I call 'principle,' to love?

"I *did* walk long over that level tract, laborious, monotonous, and unlovely, my aim ambition, my enjoyment success.

"But all suddenly, Trixie, there once met me—even me,—a new, strange power, bathing my life in a glory of sunshine, in a radiance of hope; a wonderful power, folding life in a bright, beautiful mystery, setting

labour to music, making existence an endless poem.

"I woke up all thrilling and sensitive to a new vitality. It flowed to me from the glance of two bright, deep eyes, from the touch of a little hand, from the presence, the voice, even the memory, of one who made thus all so beautiful my dull, grey life.

"Wondrous, wondrous power! It deepened every thought, ennobled every hope, glorified every aspiration of which I was capable, and I felt it would have done this unchangeably to the end.

"Then,—is it always so, I wonder?—a climax came; down went my idol in one instantaneous crash, broken in atoms, hopelessly destroyed; and instead,—a vast empty chaos, in which I stood alone.

"Love, once quickened, was all throbbing, living still, and to meet it,—nothing! I felt alone in a great darkness, a horrid torture within me, a power, meeting me everywhere, and driving me back with strong repulsion from all the old industries of my life; a power that threatened to sweep

me along, helpless, in its energy, carrying me to ruin and despair; a power that whispered poisoned thoughts of divine injustice, of heaven's curse, of life's futility; a power that met me everywhere, crying, in fierce, mocking tones—

"'Why labour thus? Why strive to live aright? Why mould your steps in self-control? Why rule your life by principle? For, behold! *I* come and sweep over your history with my strong devastation, I blight the whole bloom of your prospects, I poison your fruit as it ripens, I suck all the sweetness from your success, and your life is,—vain. Spite all your efforts and all your powers, it is mine to flood your future in sunshine or in gloom.'

"I was swept up by the strong power of love poisoned, and carried along unresisting,—I knew not, I cared not, where. Stunned and embittered, I yielded to despair; I approached, in my whole nature and character, to the brink of ruin, and I tossed my life's prospects to the wind. The power had seized me, and it hurried me along.

"Then suddenly I was arrested, and I turned to face it all. I forced myself to look into it, and to understand this mystery, this distortion of my life.

"'What does it mean?' I cried, as you have written; 'what is this terrible thing, this love?' and I found I had quite mistaken it.

"I had obeyed it as a power, I had yielded feebly to its energy, I had separated it from every other faculty of human nature, and erected it as the one sovereign sentiment destined to make man its slave.

"I had suffered it to enslave me, and had gone down beneath its force.

"I found it was all an error; I had known that man must control every power of his nature, bring himself into discipline to his resolution and his will; now I saw suddenly that this same control must be brought to bear upon this love-power, to direct and to subdue it, that it elevate, sanctify, but *not* enervate a life.

"I found that in the Book of revealed discipline love came also with the scope of a

commandment, spoken of as a power within ourselves, to be disciplined as much as anger or any other passion of our souls. '*Love*,' and '*love not*,' repeated as an order,—possible to be obeyed.

"Have I shown you that I know a little of these things?

"Can *you* apply this thought at all to life? Face your life in all its strong necessities; let not love be to you an excuse for,—*anything;* above all, no excuse for hate.

"Love still, in the deep fulfilment of the law; love in obedience, not to your heart's election only, but to the circumstances uncontrollable of your fate. Conquer love, rule love, direct love;—above all, do not *slay* it. God meant it eternally to live. Do not poison your heart because you have learnt this bitter lesson concerning it; do not crush out its sweetness because its destiny has not been your choice.

"Yield up your heart, with all its powers and passions, into the hand of Divine intention; you will receive it again, still living,

still glowing with human tenderness, to be outpoured,—according to His will.

"The request you made in the garden at Sea Grange, that I would remain your friend, is the only apology I offer for speaking thus openly upon your feelings,—and my own; similar as we have been in the possession of hearts pained and rebellious, struggling against destiny, refusing to obey.

"Yours ever,

"JAMES LINDSAY."

About six months later, the four following announcements appeared consecutively in the newspapers of the day.

First, it was intimated that—

"A marriage is arranged between Captain Godfrey Forbes Hamilton, of The Craig, ——shire, and of the Scots Fusilier Guards, and Miss Adelaide Mary Cathcart, only daughter of Edward Cathcart, Esquire, The Grove, Roehampton."

Some weeks afterwards, in a different column, came an announcement of a different kind—

"Bankruptcy.

"To surrender at the London Court.

"Godfrey F. Hamilton, Captain Fusilier Guards. Deficit, £90,000."

It was observed that the Derby, the Oaks, and Ascot, had been run in the interval between.

Only two days later the columns of the *Court Journal* spoke again, and this time they said—

"We are requested to intimate that the marriage between Captain Hamilton, of the Fusilier Guards, and Miss Adelaide Mary Cathcart, will *not* take place."

And finally, three months afterwards, these columns had the following still further to say, something more decisive even than a prospective engagement—

"At St. George's, Hanover Square, on the 14th instant, Lord Henry Ernest

Edward Stanley Palgrave, fourth son of the late Marquis of Hartleigh, to Adelaide Mary, only daughter of Edward Cathcart, The Grove, Roehampton."

These intimations threw light on the turning-points of more than one career.

A passing light, vivid and conspicuous, upon Godfrey Hamilton's, fading, however, quickly into oblivion and gloom, for he did not "surrender."

There was a nine days' wonder, a ferment of club talk, a tumult of voices bandying his name, some in regret and sympathy, some in anger and dismay, and he passed from among them,—disappeared, and ere the the season was over he was almost forgotten.

END OF VOL. II.

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